



The Holy See

MORNING MASS IN THE CHAPEL OF THE
DOMUS SANCTAE MARTHAЕ

HOMILY OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS

"The three dimensions of Christian life: election, promise, covenant"

Thursday, 2 April 2020

[Multimedia]

Introduction

In these days of pain and sadness, many hidden problems are coming to the fore. In the newspaper today, there is a photo that touches the heart: many homeless people in a city, huddling in a parking lot, under observation... There are so many homeless people today. Let us ask Mother Teresa of Calcutta to awaken in us a sense of closeness to the many people, such as the homeless, who in society, in normal life, live hidden from view but whom we see in this way in this moment of crisis.

Homily

"The Lord remembers His covenant forever". We repeated this in the Responsorial Psalm (see *Psalms* 105:8). The Lord does not forget. He never forgets. Yes, there is only one case in which He forgets: when He forgives sins. After forgiving He loses His memory, He does not remember the sins. In other cases God does not forget. His fidelity is memory. His fidelity with His people. His fidelity with Abraham is a memory of the promise He had made. God chose Abraham to take a certain road. Abraham was chosen, he was chosen. God chose him. Then in that election He promised him an inheritance and today, in the passage of the book of Genesis, there is another step. "As for me, this is my covenant with you" (*Gen* 17:4). A covenant. A covenant that makes him see his fruitfulness in the future: "You shall become the father of a multitude of nations" (*Gen*

17:4). The election, the promise and the covenant are the three dimensions of the life of faith, the three dimensions of Christian life. Each one of us has been chosen. No-one chooses to be Christian among the possibilities that the religious “market” offers. He or she has been chosen. We are Christians because we have been chosen. In this election there is a promise, there is the promise of hope, and its sign is fruitfulness: Abraham will be the father of a multitude of nations... you will be fruitful in faith (see *Gen 17:5-6*). Your faith will flourish in works, in good deeds, in works of fruitfulness too, a fruitful faith. But you must - the third step - observe the covenant with me (see 17:9). And the alliance is fidelity, being faithful. We have been chosen, the Lord has made a promise to us, and now He asks for a covenant. A covenant of fidelity. Jesus says that Abraham exalted with joy thinking, seeing his day, the day of great fruitfulness, that son of his - Jesus was a son of Abraham (see *Jn 8:56*) - who came to remake creation, which is more difficult than making it, the liturgy says. He came to redeem our sins, to free us. A Christian is a Christian not because he can show you his baptismal certificate: the baptismal certificate is just a piece of paper. You are Christian if you say yes to the Lord's choice of you, if you follow the promises the Lord has made, and you live the covenant with the Lord: this is Christian life. The sins on the way are always against these three dimensions: not accepting one's election, and so we follow many idols and many things that are not of God. Not accepting hope in the promise; which is looking far away to the promise, greeting the promises from afar, as the letter to the Hebrews says (see *Heb 6:12*; *Heb 8:6*), and wanting the promises to be today with the little idols we make; and forgetting the covenant, living without the covenant, as if we were without the covenant. Fruitfulness and joy, that joy of Abraham who saw Jesus' day and was filled with joy (see 8:56). This is the revelation that today the Word of God gives us regarding our Christian existence. May it be like that of our Father: aware of being chosen, joyful to go toward a promise, and faithful in fulfilling the covenant.

Spiritual Communion

Those who cannot receive communion can now make a spiritual communion:

My Jesus, I believe that You are present in the Most Blessed Sacrament. I love you above all things, and I desire to receive You into my soul. Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace You as if you were already there, and I unite myself wholly to You. Never permit me to be separated from You.