



The Holy See

MORNING MASS IN THE CHAPEL OF THE
DOMUS SANCTAE MARTHA HOMILY OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS

“Learning to live in moments of crisis”

Saturday, 2nd May 2020

[[Multimedia](#)]

Introduction

Let us pray today for the government leaders who have the responsibility of taking care of their peoples in this moment of crisis. For heads of State, government presidents, legislators, mayors, regional presidents... so that the Lord may help them and give them strength, because their work is not easy. And that when there are differences among them, they may understand that in moments of crisis they must be very united for the good of the people, because unity is superior to conflict.

Today, Saturday 2 May, we are joined in prayer by 300 prayer groups which are called “*madrugadores*” in Spanish, that is, “early birds”. They are people who rise early in the morning in order to pray. They are joining us now, at this moment.

Homily

The first Reading begins: “The Churches throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria were now left in peace, building themselves up, living in the fear of the Lord, and filled with the consolation of the Holy Spirit, and growing in number” (*Acts* 9:31). A time of peace. And the Church grew. And Church was calm and serene, it had the comfort of the Holy Spirit, the consolation. They were beautiful times... This was followed by the healing of Aeneas, and then Peter raises Tabitha, also known as Dorcas, from the dead. Things that are done in peacetime.

But there were times that were not peaceful, in the early Church: times of persecutions, difficult times, times that put believers in crisis. Times of crisis. One such moment of crisis is recounted today in the Gospel of John (see 6:60-69). This passage from the Gospel is the end of a series that begins with the multiplication of the loaves, when they wanted to make Jesus king. Jesus goes to pray, and the next day they can't find Him; they go to look for Him and Jesus reproaches those who seek Him because they are looking for something to eat instead of the bread of eternal life. And this whole story finishes here. They say to Him, "Give us this bread", and Jesus explains that the bread He will give is His very own body and blood.

"At that time, some of them said, 'This is a hard teaching. Who can accept it?' " (v. 60). Jesus had said that those who had not eaten His body and His blood would not have eternal life. Jesus also said, "Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day" (see v. 54). These are the things Jesus said. "This is a hard teaching" (v. 60), the disciples think. "It is too hard. Something isn't right. This man has gone beyond the limits". And this is the moment of crisis. There were moments of peace and moments of crisis. Jesus knew that the disciples were murmuring among themselves. There is a distinction here between disciples and apostles. There were the 72 or more disciples, whereas the apostles were the Twelve. Jesus "had known from the beginning which of them did not believe and who would betray Him" (v. 64). And in the face of this crisis, He reminds them: "This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless the Father has enabled them" (v. 65). He speaks again of being drawn by the Father, that the Father attracts people to Jesus. And this is how the crisis is resolved.

And after this, "many of His disciples left Him and stopped going with Him" (v. 66). They distance themselves from Him. "This man is a bit dangerous, a bit... with these doctrines... Yes, He is a good man, He preaches and heals, but when He starts doing strange things... Please, let's go" (see v. 66). And the disciples of Emmaus did the same thing, on the morning of the Resurrection: "But yes, it's strange: the women say that the tomb... but this doesn't look good, let's go away before the soldiers come and crucify us" (see *Lk* 24:22-24). The soldiers who were guarding the tomb did the same: they had seen the truth, but then they preferred to sell their secret: "Let's be sure, let's not get involved in these stories, they are dangerous" (see *Mt* 28:11-15).

A moment of crisis is a moment of choice, it is a moment that places us before the decisions that we must make. All of us, in life, have had and will have moments of crisis: family crises, marriage crises, social crises, crises at work, many crises... This pandemic, too, is a moment of social crisis.

How does one react in a moment of crisis? "From this time many of His disciples turned back and no longer followed Him" (v. 66). Jesus makes the decision to question the apostles. "You do not want to leave too, do you?" Jesus asked the Twelve" (*Jn* 6:67). Make a decision. And Peter makes the second confession: "Simon Peter answered Him, 'Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and to know that You are the Holy One of God'" (vv.

68-69). Peter confesses in the name of the Twelve that Jesus is the Holy One of God, the Son of God. The first confession, “You are the Christ, the son of the Living God” - and immediately afterwards, when Jesus began to explain the passion that was to come, Peter stops Him and says: “No, no Lord, not this”, and Jesus reproaches him (see *Mt* 16: 16-23). But Peter has matured a little and here he does not rebuke Jesus. He does not understand what Jesus is saying about eating His flesh and drinking His blood (see *Jn* 6:54-56), he does not understand, but he trusts the Master. He trusts Him. And he makes this second confession: “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the message of eternal life” (see v. 68).

This helps us, all of us, to live through moments of crisis. In my land there is a saying: “When you’re riding a horse and you have to cross a river, please, don’t change horses in the middle of the river”. In moments of crisis you need to be very steadfast in your convictions of faith. Those who left, changed horses, they sought another teacher who was not so “hard”, as they said to Him. Moments of crisis demand perseverance, silence; staying where we are, steadfast. It is not the moment to make changes. It is the moment of fidelity, of faithfulness to God, of faithfulness to the things [decisions] we had made before. It is also the moment of conversion, because this faithfulness will inspire some kind of change for the better, not to distance us from good.

Moments of peace and moments of crisis. We Christians must learn to manage both. Both of them. A spiritual father said that going through a moment of crisis is like passing through fire so as to become strong. May the Lord send us the Holy Spirit so we may be able to resist the temptations of moments of crisis, to know how to be faithful to the first words, with the hope of living moments of peace later. Let us think of our crises: crises in the family, in our neighbourhood, at work, social crises throughout the world, in our country... so many crises, many crises.

May the Lord give us the strength not to sell out our faith in moments of crisis.

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.