

Weekday Homilies of Pope Francis

June 1 to June 7, 2013 at the Chapel of Casa di Santa Martha at 7 a.m.

1. The Church is the Family of Jesus

"The Church is not a cultural organization" but it is "the family of Jesus", reiterated Pope Francis in his homily during the Mass on Saturday 01 June. He said that Christians should not be ashamed to live with the scandal of the Cross, and urged them not to be "trapped by the spirit of the world".

Pope Francis took the question put to Jesus by the scribes and chief priests, "By what authority are you doing these things?" as his starting point. Once again, he said, they were looking to set a trap for the Lord, trying to paint Him into a corner, to force Him to make a mistake. The Pope went on to ask why the scribes and Pharisees wanted to embarrass Jesus. "The problem that these people had," said the Holy Father, was not that Jesus had performed miracles. Rather, he explained, "They were shocked that the demons cried out to Jesus, 'You are the Son of God, You are the Holy One.'" This is the thing about Jesus that really scandalizes. "He is God who became incarnate." For us, too, "do they set traps in life," though, "[that characteristic] of the Church, which scandalizes, is the mystery of the Incarnation of the Word, and, "this cannot be tolerated, this the devil will not suffer."":

"How many times do you hear people say: 'But you Christians, you are a bit' more normal, like other people, reasonable! A little' more normal, do not be so hard'. But behind this is: 'But, do not come with stories, that God became man!' The Incarnation of the Word, that is the scandal behind it! We can do all the social work we want, and they will say, 'How nice, the Church, what good social work the Church does'. But if we say that we do this because those people [we help] are the flesh of Christ, there is scandal. And that is the truth, ...that is the revelation of Jesus: that presence of Jesus incarnate."

And "this is the point," said Pope Francis: "Always there will be the seduction to do good things without the scandal of the Incarnate Word, without the scandal of the Cross." Instead, we must "be consistent with this scandal, with this reality that is shocking." The Pope then recalled how the Apostle John says: "Those who deny that the Word came in the flesh is antichrist." On the other hand, he continued, "Only those who say that the Word has come in the flesh is of the Holy Spirit." Pope Francis then added that "the Church is not a cultural, religious or social organization"

"The Church is the family of Jesus. The Church confesses that Jesus is the Son of God come in the flesh: that is the scandal, and for that they persecuted Jesus. 'at the end of' they sentenced him to death for that. This is the center of persecution. If we become reasonable Christians, Social Christians, Christians in charity only, what will be the consequence? There will be no martyrs: that will be the consequence."

But when we Christians say the truth that "The Son of God has come, and was made flesh," when we, the Pope said, "preach the scandal of the Cross, there will be persecution, there will be Cross" and what "will be good". "We ask the Lord not to be ashamed to live with this scandal of the Cross. And the wisdom: the wisdom to ask not to be trapped by the spirit of the world. (Watch Video)

2. War is the suicide of humanity

"War is the suicide of humanity because it kills the heart and kills love," Pope Francis said in his homily at Mass Sunday June, 2, morning at the Casa Santa Marta. In attendance at the Mass was a group of about 80 people, consisting of relatives of Italian soldiers killed in peacekeeping missions in the last 4-5 years, particularly in Afghanistan, along with a number of soldiers wounded during the same missions.

June 2nd is “Republic Day” in Italy, which commemorates the foundation of the Italian republic in 1946. Archbishop Vincenzo Pelvi, the head of the Military Ordinary in Italy, who concelebrated Mass with the Holy Father, said it is a “significant day” in which the country expresses “a debt of love for military families.”

“The Lord hears the prayers of everyone!” – not only Solomon’s prayers on the day of the consecration of the Temple, but also the prayer of all of us. Pope Francis emphasised that fact, citing the Gospel story of the centurion who goes to Jesus to ask for the healing of his servant. He said our God is such that He hears the prayers of each one of us – not as an “anonymous” mass of prayers, but the prayers of each and every individual. “Our God is the God of the great and the God of small, our God is personal,” He listens to everyone with His heart, and loves “from the heart”:

“Today we have come to pray for our dead, for our wounded, for the victims of the madness that is war! It is the suicide of humanity, because it kills the heart, it kills precisely that which is the message of the Lord: it kills love! Because war comes from hatred, from envy, from desire for power, and – we’ve seen it many times - it comes from that hunger for more power.”

So many times, the Pope noted, we’ve seen “the great ones of the earth want to solve” local problems, economic problems, economic crises “with a war.” “Why? Because, for them, money is more important than people! And war is just that: it is an act of faith in money, in idols, in idols of hatred, in the idol that leads to killing one’s brother, which leads to killing love. It reminds me of the words of God our Father to Cain, who, out of envy, had killed his brother: ‘Cain, where is your brother?’ Today we can hear this voice: it is God our Father who weeps, crying for this madness of ours, who asks all of us, ‘Where is your brother?’ Who says to the powerful of the earth, ‘Where is your brother? What have you done!’”

From this exhortation, Pope Francis went on to pray to the Lord, that He might “take all evil far away from us,” repeating this prayer “even with tears, with the tears of the heart”: “‘Turn to us, o Lord, and have mercy on us, because we are sad, we are distressed. See our misery, and our pain and forgive all sins,’ because behind a war there are always sins: there is the sin of idolatry, the sin of exploiting men on the altar of power, sacrificing them. ‘Turn to us, o Lord, and have mercy, because we are sad and distressed. See our misery and our pain.’ We are confident that the Lord will hear us and will do anything to give us the spirit of consolation. So be it.” (Watch Video)

3. The corrupt harm the Church; the saints are a light for all

Sinners, the corrupt, and saints: Pope Francis focused on these three groups in his homily for Mass Monday June 3. The Pope said the corrupt do great harm to the Church because they are worshipers of themselves; the saints, on the other hand, do great good, they are lights in the Church.

What happens when we want to become the owners of the vineyard? The parable of the wicked tenants in Monday's Gospel reading provided the starting point for Pope Francis’ homily, which focused on “the three models of Christians in the Church: sinners, corrupt persons; and the saints.” The Pope noted that “there is no need to talk too much about sinners, because we are all sinners.” “We recognize this from the inside,” he continued, “and we know what a sinner is. If any one of us does not feel that way, he should make a visit to a spiritual doctor” because “something is wrong.” The parable, however, presents us with another figure, the figure of those who want “to take possession of the vineyard, and who have lost the relationship with the Master of the vineyard,” a Master who, “has called us with love, who protects us, but who then gives us freedom.” Those who would take possession of the vineyard, “think they are strong, they think they are independent of God”:

“These, slowly, slipped on that autonomy, that independence in their relationship with God: ‘We don’t need that Master, who shouldn’t come and disturb us!’ And we go forward with this. These are the corrupt! These were sinners like all of us, but they have taken a step beyond that, as if they were confirmed in their sin: they don’t

need God! But it only seems so, for in their genetic code there is this relationship with God. And since they can't deny this, they make a special god: they themselves are god. They are corrupt. This is a danger for us, too," he added. In the "Christian communities," he said, the corrupt think only of their own group: "Good, good. It's about us - they think - but, in fact, 'they are only out for themselves':

"Judas [was the first]: from a greedy sinner, he ended in corruption. The road of autonomy is a dangerous road: the corrupt are very forgetful, have forgotten this love, with which the Lord made the vineyard, has made them! They severed the relationship with this love! And they become worshipers of themselves. How bad are the corrupt in the Christian community! May the Lord deliver us from sliding down this road of corruption."

The Pope spoke also of the saints, remembering that today is the fiftieth anniversary of the death of Bd Pope John XXIII, "a model of holiness." In the day's Gospel, he added, the saints are those who "go to collect the rent" on the vineyard. "They know what is expected of them, but they must do it, and they do their duty": "The saints are those who obey the Lord, those who worship the Lord, those who have not lost the memory of the love with which the Lord has made the vineyard: the saints in the Church. Just as the corrupt do so much harm to the Church, the saints do so much good. The apostle John says of the corrupt that they are the antichrist, that they are among us, but they are not of us. About the saints, the Word of God tells us they are like light, 'that they will be before the throne of God in adoration.' Today we ask the Lord for the grace to understand that we are sinners, but truly sinners, not sinners broadly, but sinners with regard to this, that, and the other thing, concrete sins, with the concreteness of sin. The grace to not become corrupt: sinners, yes; corrupt, no! And the grace to walk in the paths of holiness.

4. Hypocrisy is the language of the corrupt

Hypocrites may say all the right things, but for the wrong reasons. A Christian should not use a "socially mannered language", prone to hypocrisy, but speak the truth of the Gospel with the transparency of a child. There is no truth without love; love is the first truth. This was the lesson drawn by Pope Francis at morning Mass Tuesday June 4.

From the corrupt to their language of choice: hypocrisy. Pope Francis continued his thread of thought from Monday's homily in his reflections on the episode recounted in the Gospel of the day: The tribute due to Caesar, and the Pharisees and of the Herodians' subtle questioning of Christ on the legitimacy of that tribute.

Pope Francis noted that the intention with which they approach Jesus is to make him "fall into a trap. Their question whether it is lawful or not to pay taxes to Caesar is made with soft words, with beautiful words, with overly sweet words. They try to show themselves his friends. But it is all false. Pope Francis says this is because, "they do not love the truth" but only themselves, "and so they try to deceive, to involve others in their deceit, their lies. They have a lying heart, they cannot tell the truth ":

"Hypocrisy is the very language of corruption. And when Jesus speaks to his disciples, he says: 'let your language be,' Yes, yes! No, no '. Hypocrisy is not a language of truth, because the truth is never given alone. Never! It is always given with love! There is no truth without love. Love is the first truth. If there is no love, there is no truth. They want a true enslaved to their interests. There is a love, of sorts: it is love of self, love for oneself. That narcissist idolatry that leads them to betray others, that leads them to abuse of trust. "

Pope Francis continued, what looks like a "persuasive language," instead leads to "errors, to lies." Then with a hint of irony, he noted that those who now approached Jesus and "seem so amiable in their language, are the same people who will go to fetch him on Thursday evening in the Garden of Olives, and will bring him to Pilate on Friday." Instead, Jesus asks exactly the opposite of those who follow him, a language of "yes is yes, no is no," a "language of truth and love. And the meekness that Jesus wants us to have, has nothing, has nothing of this adulation, this sickly sweet way of going on. Nothing! Meekness is simple, it is like that of a child, who is

not hypocritical, because it is not corrupt. When Jesus says to us: 'Let your speech be! Yes is yes! No, is no! 'with the soul of a child', he means the exact opposite to the speech of these [hypocrites –ed]".

The Pope's finally said "certain inner weakness", stimulated by "vanity", that means "we like people to say good things about us." The "corrupt know this well" and "are trying to weaken us with this language. Let us think closely today: What is our language? Do we speak in truth, with love, or do we speak with that social language to be polite, even say nice things, which we do not feel? Let our language be evangelical brothers and sisters! Then these hypocrites that start out with flattery, adulation and all of that, end up, through false witnesses, with accusing the very ones they had flattered. Let us ask the Lord today that our language be the language of the simple, the language of a child, the language of the children of God, the language of truth in love. "

5. Lamenting is Prayer, not Sin

Lamenting one's suffering to God is not a sin, but a prayer of the heart that reaches the Lord: this was Pope Francis' reflection at Mass Wednesday June 05, morning.

The story of Tobit and Sarah, reported in the first reading of the day, was the focus of the Pope's homily: Two just people who live dramatic situations. The first is blinded despite his performing good works, even risking his life, and the second marries seven men in turn, each of whom dies before their wedding night. Both, in their great sorrow, pray to God to let them die. "They are people in extreme situations," explained Pope Francis, "and they seek a way out." He said, "They complain," but, "they do not blaspheme.":

"To lament before God is not a sin. A priest I know once said to a woman who lamented to God about her misfortune: 'But, madam, that is a form of prayer. Go ahead [with it].' The Lord hears, He listens to our complaints. Think of the greats, of Job, when in chapter III (he says): 'Cursed be the day I came into the world,' and Jeremiah, in the twentieth chapter: 'Cursed be the day' – they complain even cursing, not the Lord, but the situation, right? It is only human."

The Holy Father also reflected on the many people who live borderline cases: malnourished children, refugees, the terminally ill. He went on to observe that, in the Gospel of the day, there are the Sadducees who present to Jesus the difficult case of a woman, who is the widow of seven men. Their question, however, was not posed with sincerity:

"The Sadducees were talking about this woman as if she were a laboratory, all aseptic - hers was an [abstract] moral [problem]. When we think of the people who suffer so much, do we think of them as though they were an [abstract moral conundrum], pure ideas, 'but in this case ... this case ...', or do we think about them with our hearts, with our flesh, too? I do not like it when people speak about tough situations in an academic and not a human manner, sometimes with statistics ... and that's it. In the Church there are many such people in this situation."

The Pope said that in these cases, we must do what Jesus says, pray: "Pray for them. They must come into my heart, they must be a [cause of] restlessness for me: my brother is suffering, my sister suffers. Here [is] the mystery of the communion of saints: pray to the Lord, 'But, Lord, look at that person: he cries, he is suffering. Pray, let me say, with the flesh: that our flesh pray. Not with ideas. Praying with the heart."

And the prayers of Tobit and Sarah, which they offer up to the Lord even despite their asking to die, give us hope, because they are accepted by God in His own way, who does not let them die, but heals Tobit and finally gives a husband to Sara. Prayer, he explained, always reaches God, [so long as] it is prayer from the heart." Instead, "when it is [an abstract exercise], such as that the Sadducees were discussing, never reaches him, because it never goes out of ourselves: we do not care. It is an intellectual game." In conclusion, Pope Francis called on the faithful to pray for those who live dramatic situations and who suffer as much as Jesus on the

cross, who cry, "Father, Father, why have you forsaken me?" Let us pray - he concluded – "so that our prayer reaches [heaven] and let it be [a source of] hope for all of us." (Watch Video)

6. The subtle danger of idolatry

"Everyone has "small or not so small" idolatries in their lives, but the road that leads to God is one of exclusive love for Him, as Jesus taught us." Pope Francis at Mass on Thursday June 6.

As is custom the Pope reflected on the daily readings and the Gospel episode that recounts the scribe who approached Jesus to ask which, in his opinion, "is the first of all the commandments". Pope Francis noted that the scribe's intentions were probably "far from innocent", that he gives the impression of wanting to "test" Christ, if not to "make him fall into a trap". The scribe approves of Jesus' answer – where he quotes from the bible: "Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is Lord alone!"- and Christ responds with the comment: "You are not far from the kingdom of God". Pope Francis said that, in essence, with that "you are not far" Jesus wanted to say to the scribe: "You know the theory very well," but "you are still some distance from the Kingdom of God", that is, you have to walk to "transform this commandment into reality", because we "profess God through our way of life":

"It's not enough to say: 'But I believe in God, God is the only God.' That's fine, but how do you live this out in your life's journey? Because we can say, 'The Lord is the only God, there is no other', but then live as if He was not the only God and have other deities at our disposal ... There is a danger of ' idolatry: idolatry, which is brought to us through the spirit of the world. And in this Jesus was clear: the spirit of the world, no. At the Last Supper he asks the Father to defend us from the spirit of the world, because the spirit of the world leads us to idolatry. "

Pope Francis continued: "Idolatry is subtle...we all have our hidden idols" and "the path of life to follow, to not be far from the kingdom of God" involves "discovering our hidden idols." The Pope pointed out that this attitude is already present in the Bible, in the episode in which Rachel, Jacob's wife, pretends she is not carrying idols which instead she took from her father's house and hid in her saddle. Pope Francis said that we too "have hid them in our saddle ... But we have to look for them and we have to destroy them," because to follow God the only path is that of a love based on "loyalty":

"And loyalty demands we drive out our idols, that we uncover them: they are hidden in our personality, in our way of life. But these are hidden idols mean that we are not faithful in love. The Apostle James, when he says, whoever wants to be a lover of the world makes himself an enemy of God, begins by saying: 'Adulterers!'. He gives out to us, but with that adjective: adulterers. Why? Because whoever is 'friend' of the world is an idolater, is not faithful to the love of God! The path that is not distant, that advances, moves forward in the Kingdom of God, is a path of loyalty which resembles that of married love. "

Pope Francis then asked, even "with our small or not so small idolatries" how is it possible not to be faithful "to a love so great?". To do this, you need to trust in Christ, who is "total loyal" and who "loves us so much. We can now ask Jesus: 'Lord, you who are so good, teach me to be this path so that every day I may be less distant from the kingdom of God, this path to drive out all of my idols'. It is difficult, but we must begin ... The idols hidden in the many saddles, which we have in our personalities, in the way we live: drive out the idol of worldliness, which leads us to become enemies of God. We ask this grace of Jesus, today. "

7. It is more difficult to let God love us, than to love Him!

It's harder to open our hearts and let God love us than to love God in return. But the only way to really love Him is to love others, especially the poor. God is an expert in the science of tenderness and we should allow ourselves to be loved by Him. This was Pope Francis' message at morning Mass Friday June 7, on the Solemnity of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus.

Pope Francis referred to the solemnity as “the feast of love” of a “heart that loved so much” and repeated several times during his homily that Jesus loved us not with His words but with His deeds and his life. A love which, St. Ignatius said, "manifests itself more in deeds than in words" and that is especially "more giving than receiving." Pope Francis said "these two criteria are like the pillars of true love" and the Good Shepherd above all else represents the love of God. He knows His sheep by name, "because His is not an abstract or general love: it is love towards everyone ".

"A God who draws near out of love, walks with His people, and this walk comes to an unimaginable point. We could never have imagined that the same Lord would become one of us and walk with us, be present with us, present in His Church, present in the Eucharist, present in His Word, present in the poor, He is present, walking with us. And this is closeness: the shepherd close to his flock, close to his sheep, whom he knows, one by one. "

Reflecting on a passage from the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel, the Pope highlighted another aspect of God's love: caring for the lost, the wounded and the sick sheep: "Tenderness! But the Lord loves us tenderly. The Lord knows that beautiful science of caresses, the tenderness of God. He does not love us with words. He comes close - closeness - and gives us His love with tenderness. Closeness and tenderness! The Lord loves us in these two ways, He draws near and gives all His love even in the smallest things: with tenderness. And this is a powerful love, because closeness and tenderness reveal the strength of God's love".

"But do you love each other as I have loved you?" Pope Francis asked this question of those present, emphasizing how love is "being close to others", is "like that of the Good Samaritan" and in particular , in the sign of "closeness and tenderness". He also asked: How can we return all this love to the Lord? By "loving", by being "closer to Him," by being "tender with Him", but this alone, he said, "is not enough":

"This may sound like heresy, but it is the greatest truth! It is more difficult to let God love us, than to love Him! The best way to love Him in return is to open our hearts and let Him love us. Let Him draw close to us and feel Him close to us. This is really very difficult: letting ourselves be loved by Him. And that is perhaps what we need to ask today in the Mass: 'Lord, I want to love You, but teach me the difficult science, the difficult habit of letting myself be loved by You, to feel You close and feel Your tenderness ! May the Lord give us this grace."



Pope Francis Says Upcoming Encyclical on Faith Is Nearly Complete - Meets with Ordinary Council of the General Secretariat of the Synod of Bishops

By Junno Arocho Esteves

VATICAN CITY, June 13, 2013 (Zenit.org) - This morning, Pope Francis met with members of the XIII Ordinary Council of the General Secretariat of the Synod of Bishops.

Although he had prepared remarks, the Holy Father decided to forego his original statement, and engaged the members of the Council on several themes of the Synod which focused on the “New Evangelization for the transmission of the faith.”

The Holy Father also revealed that the upcoming Encyclical letter on the Year of Faith is nearly complete. Pope Francis stated that the encyclical was the work of “four hands”. Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI had handed over his draft of the encyclical which deals with several themes.

Among the themes are the nature of ecclesial collegiality and the synodal structure in the service of the Church's universal mission and in cooperation with the Petrine ministry, the crisis of the family, care for the created order, and the recovery of a whole and wholesome understanding of human being.

“It is an extremely powerful document,” Pope Francis said. “The majority of the work was done by him [Benedict XVI].”

“I felt that the Year of Faith would end without a good document that can help us,” the Pope said. “And so I thought this: an exhortation on the evangelization that references the Synod. It can be taken from the Synod but with a much broader framework. I liked the idea and I will go down this path. I have written something and in August, where I will be more relaxed at home, I can [continue writing] and go forward.”

The Holy Father also discussed several themes after giving the Bishops gathered an opportunity to raise any questions or suggestions. Among the matters discussed were the human ecology, anthropology. “We live in a new anthropology,” the Pope said. “where secularism has become secularization. This is a serious problem. In the plane of meeting with God, we are living in a gnostic age.”

The Holy Father addressed the crisis of the family, stating that it needs to be addressed by both the Church’s pastors and teachers working in tandem.