



The Holy See

POPE FRANCIS

MORNING MEDITATION IN THE CHAPEL OF THE
DOMUS SANCTAE MARTHAЕ

The wisdom of Christians

Friday, 24 May 2013

(by *L'Osservatore Romano*, Weekly ed. in English, n. 22, 29 May 2013)

“In the prayer from the Latin Missal for Mass this morning dedicated to Mary Help of Christians,” said Pope Francis in his homily on 24 May, during Mass in the Domus Sanctae Marthae, “we ask for two graces: to endure with patience and to conquer with love oppressions both internal and external”. They are the graces proper to a Christian; but “to endure with patience is not easy” he acknowledged. Indeed “when difficulties come from outside or when problems are born in the heart, in the soul, inner problems, it is not easy to endure them patiently. It is much easier to be impatient”.

What does it mean to endure? To endure is “to bear a difficulty. But is shouldering a burden a difficulty? No”. Enduring, explained the Pope, “is taking up the difficulty and carrying it with strength, so that the difficulty does not drag us down. This is a Christian virtue. St Paul says several times: Suffer [endure]. This means not letting ourselves be overcome by difficulties. This means that the Christians have the strength to not give up, to carry difficulties. Carry them, carry them with vigour. It is not easy, because discouragement comes, and one has the urge to give up and say, ‘Well, come on, we’ll do what we can but no more’. But no, suffering is a grace. In difficulties, we must ask for [this grace], in difficulty”.

The other grace the Pope asks for is “to overcome with love”. There are many “ways to win, but the grace that we request today is the grace of victory with love, through love. And this is not easy. When we have external enemies that make us suffer so much: it is not easy, to win with love. There is a desire to take revenge, to turn another against them.... Love: the meekness that Jesus taught us. And that is the victory! The Apostle John tells us in the First Reading: ‘This is our victory, our faith.’ Our faith is precisely this: believing in Jesus who taught us love and taught us to love everyone. And the proof that we are loving is when we pray for our enemies”.

Praying for our enemies, for those who make us suffer, the Pope continued, “is not easy”. But we are “defeated Christians” if we do not forgive enemies and if we do not pray for them. And “we find so many sad, discouraged Christians”, he exclaimed, because “they did not have this grace of enduring with patience and overcoming with love”.

Therefore, “let us ask Our Lady to give us the grace to endure with patience and to overcome with love. How many people — so many old people — have taken this path! And it is beautiful to see them: they have that beautiful countenance, that serene happiness. They do not say much, but have a patient heart, a heart filled with love. They know what forgiving enemies means, they know what it is to pray for enemies. So many Christians are like that”!

Present at the Mass were employees of the Pontifical Council for Social Communications led by the president, Archbishop Claudio Maria Celli. Also present were Bishop Janusz Bogusław Stepnowski, of Łódź, Poland and Bishop Fernando Arêas Rifan, Apostolic Administrator of the Personal Apostolic Administration of São João Maria Vianney in Campos, Brazil. And, on the Day of Prayer for the Church in China, Archbishop Savio Hon Tai-Fai, Secretary of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, and a group of priests, religious, seminarians and lay people from China also attended the celebration. At the end of the prayers of the faithful, the Pope prayed: “For the noble Chinese people: May the Lord bless them and Our Lady keep them”. Mass concluded with a hymn to the Virgin Mary in Chinese.