



# The Holy See

---

**POPE FRANCIS**

MORNING MEDITATION IN THE CHAPEL OF THE  
*DOMUS SANCTAE MARTHAЕ*

*The joy of fatherhood*

*Wednesday, 26 June 2013*

(by *L'Osservatore Romano*, Weekly ed. in English, n. 27, 3 July 2013)

The Pontiff said at mass that “all of us must feel the joy of fatherhood”. This is a topic, he immediately added, that also applies in the case of the celibate priesthood, for “fatherhood means giving life to others”. This is why for priests it means “pastoral fatherhood, spiritual fatherhood”, which is always and in any case, “giving life, becoming fathers”.

Concelebrating with the Holy Father were Cardinal Salvatore De Giorgi, accompanied by friends and by about 80 priests who are close to him and wanted to celebrate the 60th anniversary of his ordination on 28 June 1953.

In his homily Pope Francis drew from the day’s Readings (cf. Gen 15:1-12; 17-18), which speak of Abraham’s covenant with the Lord. Our father in faith, he explained, “felt that the Lord loved him deeply, that he had promised him many things, but felt in need of offspring. He felt within him “that cry of nature: I want to have a son”. Then, the Pope said, he spoke to the Lord of his “desire to become a father”. For there is something lacking in a man, “something is wrong”.

Abraham’s fatherhood may be seen again at another moment: “when he is preparing the sacrifice: he takes animals, cuts them up but the birds of prey swoop down. I find it really moving to see this

90-year old man, stick in hand, defending the sacrifice, defending what belongs to him". It is an image Pope Francis associates with "a father defending the family". This, he continued, "is a grace we priests must implore: the grace of pastoral fatherhood, of spiritual fatherhood". Indeed, although we can all have sins, even many sins, not having spiritual sons and daughters, not becoming pastors, is equivalent to living a life that does not reach the end but stops half way".

After linking his theme with the presence of Cardinal De Giorgi and the friends who accompanied him, the Holy Father said: "today the Lord also gives us the grace of this Bible passage in this Mass in which we are celebrating a father. I am sure" that "dear Salvatore... has been a father" and the participation of so many priests in his rejoicing "is a sign of it".