



The Holy See

POPE FRANCIS

MORNING MEDITATION IN THE CHAPEL OF THE
DOMUS SANCTAE MARTHAE

Contemplating Jesus, meek and suffering

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It is not easy for Christians to live according to the principles and virtues inspired by Jesus. “It is not easy, but,” Pope Francis said at Mass on Thursday morning, 12 September, in the Santa Marta Chapel, “it is possible”: it suffices “to contemplate Jesus suffering and humanity suffering” and to live “a life hidden in God with Jesus”.

The Pope’s reflection was spurred by the liturgical memorial that day of the Holy Name of Mary. “Today we celebrate Our Lady’s name day. The Holy Name of Mary. Formerly this feast was called the Sweet Name of Mary and today in the prayer we asked for the grace to experience the power and sweetness of Mary. Then it changed, but in prayer this ‘sweetness’ of her name remained. We are in need today of the sweetness of Our Lady to understand the things that Jesus asks of us. It is not an easy list to put into practice: love your enemies, do good, give without hoping for anything in return, to him who strikes you offer the other cheek, to him who takes your cloak offer your tunic as well. These are heavy demands. But all of them were lived by Our Lady in her own way: the grace of gentleness, the grace of meekness.

“The Apostle Paul wrote on the same point: ‘Put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassion, kindness, lowliness, meekness, and patience, forbearing one another and, if one has

a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive' (cf. Col 3 12-14). But how is this possible? How can I prepare myself for this? What do I have to study." The answer is clear: "With our own strength, we cannot do it. Grace alone can do it in us. Our effort helps; it's necessary but not enough".

The Apostle Paul teaches us something, "he tells us: 'brothers, if you are risen with Christ seek the things of above where Christ is triumphant; he is there, seated at the right hand of God. Turn your thoughts to the things of that place, not of the earth... You are in fact dead and your life is hidden with Christ in God'". Compassion, kindness, lowliness, meekness, patience, forbearance are the virtues we need to follow the path indicated by Christ. To receive them "is a grace. A grace that comes from contemplating Jesus".

"Only by contemplating the suffering humanity of Jesus can we become meek, humble, and tender as he is. There is no other way". Certainly, we must make an effort to "find Jesus; to dwell on his passion, on how much he suffered; to think of his meek silence". That is our effort; then "the rest is up to him, and he will take care of everything that is missing. But you have to do this much: hide your life in God with Christ".

Thus, to be good Christians you have to contemplate the suffering humanity of Jesus. "How can we bear witness? Contemplate Jesus. How can we forgive? Contemplate Jesus suffering. How can we not hate our neighbour? Contemplate Jesus suffering. How can we avoid gossiping about our neighbour? Contemplate Jesus suffering. There is no other way". These virtues are the those of the Father, who forgives us always, and Our Lady, Our Mother, shares in these virtues too. "Let us entrust ourselves to Our Lady. And when today we give her our best wishes on her feast day, let us ask her that she ask for the grace for us to experience her sweetness".