



The Holy See

POPE FRANCIS

MORNING MEDITATION IN THE CHAPEL OF THE
DOMUS SANCTAE MARTHAE

A new heart

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(by <http://www.osservatoreromano.va>)

“God’s weakness” is that, after having forgiven us, he forgets our sins. He is always ready to make us radically “change [our] life, not just mentality and heart”. For our part, however, we must commit to this “new covenant,” this “recreation”, putting aside the temptation to condemn others and the nonsense of worldliness, and continuously reviving our “belonging” to the Lord. These were the central points of Pope Francis’ homily on Friday, 20 January, in the Casa Santa Marta.

The liturgy “has an oration, a very beautiful prayer which makes us understand the depth of Jesus Christ’s work: ‘O God, you have wonderfully created the world, but more wonderfully you have recreated it’, namely, with the blood of Jesus, with redemption”, the Pope said. Precisely “this renewal, this recreation is what is spoken about today in the first reading”, which was taken from the letter to the Hebrews (8: 6-13). We are confronted with the Lord’s promise, he said: “The days will come, when I will establish a new covenant. Not like the covenant that I made with their fathers”. It is a “new covenant”, therefore, “and the new covenant which God makes in Jesus Christ is the recreation: he renews everything”. This means “renewing everything from the roots, not just in appearance”.

“This new covenant”, the Holy Father explained, “has its own characteristics”. As the letter to the

Hebrews continues:

This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my laws into their minds, and write them on their hearts". This means that "the law of the Lord is not just a way of acting externally", Francis explained, because "the covenant which he will make is putting the law itself into our mind and heart: we change our mentality". Since "in the new covenant there is a change of mentality, there is a change of heart, a change of feeling, a change of a way of acting: it is a different way of seeing things".

In order to drive home this point, the Pontiff used an "example: I can see the work of a person, we think of an architect". We evaluate him "with a cold, technical, objective attitude", saying: "he is doing well, he is technically doing well". Or, he continued, "I can look on him with envy because he has done something well that I am not able to do", and this is "another attitude". Then again, "I can look on him with benevolence, even with joy", saying: "well done, you did well, this pleases me greatly, I am also happy!". There are therefore "three different attitudes".

"The new covenant", Francis said, "changes our heart and makes us see the law of the Lord with this new heart, with this new mind". Referring "to the doctors of the law who persecuted Jesus", the Pope recalled how "they did everything that was prescribed by the law, they had the law in hand, everything, everything, everything. However, their mentality was a mentality that was far from God, it was an egotistical mentality, centred on themselves: Their hearts were hearts which condemned". In short, they were "always condemning". Yet, there is that "new covenant which changes our heart and changes our mind: there is a change of mentality".

Referring back to the letter of the Hebrews, the Pontiff showed how "then the Lord went on: 'I will put my laws into their minds, and write them on their hearts... For I will be merciful toward their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more'".

Reflecting on these words, Francis added, "at times I like to think, joking a little with the Lord: 'You don't have a good memory'". This "is God's weakness: when God forgives, he forgets, forgets". This is so much the case that "the Lord will never say 'you'll pay!': he forgets, because he forgives". Faced with "a penitent heart, he forgives and forgets: 'I will forget, I will not remember their sins'". And "even this is an invitation to not remind the Lord about sins, that is, to sin no more: 'You have forgiven me, you have forgotten, but I must...'". It involves a true "change of life: the new covenant renews me, and makes me change my life, not just in mentality and heart, but life". This spurs us to "live thus, without sin, far from sin". And "this is the recreation: in this way the Lord recreates all of us".

The passage from the letter to the Hebrews then proposes "a third feature, a change of belonging". In fact, we read: "I will be their God, and they shall be my people". It is "that belonging" which leads us to say: "You are the only God for me, the others do not exist". This is because,

Francis added, “other gods, as an elderly person I knew said, are nonsense: ‘you alone are my God, and I am yours, this people is yours’”.

Therefore, the Pontiff stressed, “change of mentality, change of heart, change of life and change of belonging: this is the recreation which the Lord makes more wonderfully than the first the first creation”. In conclusion, Francis suggested that we ask “the Lord to move forward in this covenant, of being faithful: the seal of this covenant, of this fidelity, to be faithful to this work which the Lord does to change our mentality, to change our hearts”. Always remembering how “the prophets said: the Lord will change your heart of stone into a heart of flesh”. Thus, the Pope stressed, is the responsibility to “change the heart, change our life, to sin no more, and not remind the Lord of what he has forgotten with our sins today, and to change belonging: never belong to worldliness, to the spirit of the world, to the nonsense of the Lord, only to the Lord”.