



The Holy See

POPE FRANCIS

MORNING MEDITATION IN THE CHAPEL OF THE
DOMUS SANCTAE MARTHAE

Woman is the world's harmony

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

“To understand a woman, one must dream of her first”. This is why woman is “the great gift of God”, able to “bring harmony to creation”. Thus, Pope Francis said with a touch of poetic tenderness, “I like to think that God created woman so that all of us would have a mother”. With this thought, Pope Francis composed a veritable hymn to women during Mass at Santa Marta on Thursday morning. It is woman, Francis recognized, who “teaches us to caress, to love tenderly and who makes of the world something beautiful”. And if “exploiting people is a crime harmful to humanity”, then “exploiting a woman is all the more so”, because “it is destroying the harmony that God wanted to give the world”.

Francis’ meditation was inspired by the day’s readings, taken from Genesis (2:18-25) and the Gospel of Mark (7:24-30). The liturgy “continues the narrative of the creation of the world”, the Pope began. He also noted that it seems “that with the creation of man everything is finished”, and thus “God rests”. However, “something is missing: man is alone” and God recognizes man’s loneliness, saying: “it is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him”, Genesis tells us.

Thus, “by hand — this is a literary way to say it — ‘out of the ground the Lord God formed every

beast of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them”, the Pope read. And God said to man: “these shall be your companionship. Give them a name”. From God, Francis continued, “this is a mandate of dominion”. Basically He tells man: “You shall be master of all these, the one who names them, the one who commands”. But “man did not find a helper fit for him”, we read in Genesis. Thus, “man was alone, with all these animals: ‘but listen, why not take a faithful dog to accompany you in life, then two cats, to pet them: the faithful dog is good, cats are nice — for some, not for others — not for mice!’”. But man “did not find companionship in these animals” and, thus, “he was lonely”.

Francis continued, covering the passage of Genesis point by point: “So the Lord ‘caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man’ — He puts him to sleep”. Thus, “a lonely man, loneliness”; and “now the man is asleep; the man’s dream: he was sleeping”. And then “by hand”, the Pope said, God “took one of his ribs and made ‘a woman and brought her to man’. When man sees her, he says: ‘Ah, this time, yes! This is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh. She shall be called Woman’ — he gives her a name — ‘because she was taken out of Man’”. Thus, Francis explained, for man, “she is something different from everything else he had; she is what he was lacking so as not to be lonely: woman; he discovered her, he saw her”. But “before seeing her, he dreamt of her”. In fact, the Pope said, “in order to understand a woman, one must dream of her first; she cannot be understood like all the other beings: she is something different”. This is precisely “how God made her: being dreamt of first”.

“So often”, the Pontiff noted, “when we speak of women, we speak in a functional way: a woman is for doing this, for doing, no! First she is for something else: woman brings something without which the world would not be like this”. Woman “is something different; she is something that brings a richness that man and all of creation and all the animals do not have”. Indeed, “Adam, before seeing her, dreamt of her: there is something poetic in this narrative”. And “then the third passage, when Adam says, ‘this is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh’: the destiny of both of them”. We read in Genesis: “Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh”. Yes, “one flesh”.

Adam, Francis reiterated, “could not be one flesh with the birds, with the dog, with the cat, with all the animals, with all of creation. No, no! Only with woman. This is destiny; this is the future; this is what was missing”. And “woman thus comes to crown creation. Moreover: she brings harmony to creation”. Therefore, “when there is no woman, harmony is lacking”. We also say: “this is a society with a strong masculine attitude”. It lacks a woman’s touch. One might also say that “woman is for washing dishes, for doing”. But instead, “no: woman is for bringing harmony. Without woman there is no harmony”. Man and woman “are not equal; one is not superior to the other, no. It is just that man does not bring harmony: it is she who brings that harmony that teaches us to caress, to love tenderly, and who makes of the world something beautiful”.

Thus, the Pontiff emphasized these “three steps”: first of all, “the lonely man, the loneliness of man

without woman; second, the dream: one can never understand woman without dreaming of her first; third, destiny: one flesh”.

“A few months ago”, Francis shared, “in an audience, as I was going along greeting the people who were behind the barriers, a married couple who were celebrating their 60th wedding anniversary: they were not very old because they had married young; they were approaching 80, but they were well, smiling”. The Pope asked them, because, he said, “I always ask something, jokingly, of the people celebrating wedding anniversaries” — which of the two has had the “most patience” in their 60 years of marriage. “They looked into each other’s eyes — I will never forget those eyes — then they turned and told me, both of them together: ‘We are in love’”. Here, Francis added, “after 60 years, this means one flesh and this is what woman brings: the ability to fall in love”; she brings “harmony to the world”.

“So often, we hear: ‘It is important that in this society, in this institution, there be a woman here to do this, to do these things’. But “functionality is not woman’s purpose: it is true that a woman must do things and does things — as we all do”. However, “woman’s purpose is to create harmony, and without woman there is no harmony in the world”. Yes, the Pope continued, “exploiting people is a crime harmful to humanity, it’s true, but exploiting a woman is all the more so: it is destroying the harmony that God wanted to give the world”. It is truly “destroying, it is not only an offence, a crime: it is destruction; it is going backwards; it is destroying harmony”.

“This is God’s great gift: he gave us woman”, the Pontiff affirmed. And in the day’s passage from the Gospel of Mark, “we heard what a woman is capable of”, Francis noted, referring to the woman whose daughter was possessed by an unclean spirit. A “courageous” woman who “went ahead courageously, but she is more, she is more: woman is harmony, she is poetry, she is beauty”. And thus, “without her the world would not be so beautiful; it would not be harmonious”.