



The Holy See

POPE FRANCISMORNING MEDITATION IN THE CHAPEL OF THE
*DOMUS SANCTAE MARTHAE***Compassion is an Act of Justice**

Tuesday, 17 September 2019

[Multimedia]

“Compassion is the language of God”. So how can we turn away from and remain indifferent to the poor, those who are alone and fragile? Pope Francis reflected on this question during Mass at Santa Marta on Tuesday, 17 September. Commenting on the Gospel passage from Luke (7:11-17), he said that Jesus felt compassion. It is compassion “that makes him see the ultimate reality of that moment: there was a great crowd following him; there were the disciples, there was the funeral procession, the mother, the dead man ... but he saw the reality and the reality was that woman, stripped of everything because she had lost her only son and she had been left a widow”. Compassion, the Holy Father explained, reveals reality as it is; “compassion is like the lens of the heart: it makes us truly understand the magnitude”.

“Our God is a God of compassion and we can say that compassion is God’s weakness but also his strength”. It was indeed his compassion that led him to send his Son to us. “Compassion is not a simple feeling of pity: this is superficial”, the Pope affirmed. Rather, it is “involving oneself in the problems of others”. However, he added, the disciples did not fully understand, as demonstrated by the Gospel passage on the multiplication of the loaves when the Apostles ask the Lord to dismiss the crowds so they could go and buy bread for themselves in the villages (cf. Mt 14:15): “we must end here; they were prudent.... Considering his response, I think that in that moment Jesus became angry in his heart: ‘you give them something to eat’”. The Lord “had compassion because he saw these people as sheep without a shepherd”. Thus “on the one hand, there is the gesture of Jesus: always compassion; and on the other: the attitude of the disciples, selfish”. The Pontiff invited the faithful to conduct an examination of conscience: “Do I usually look the other way? Or do I allow the Holy Spirit to place me on the path of compassion?”.

The Holy Father ended his homily by recalling the figure of the widow cited in the Gospel passage. “Jesus tells the mother: ‘Do not weep’, a compassionate caress; he approached and touched the bier. The bearers stopped. And then he said to the young man: ‘I say to you arise’. The dead man sat up and began to speak. And how does it end? ‘And he gave him to his mother’”. This was an “act of justice”. Indeed, “compassion takes us on the path to true justice. We must always return what rightfully belongs to another, and this always saves us from selfishness, from indifference, from closing ourselves off”, Pope Francis stressed. He concluded by imploring God to “have compassion for each of us: we need it”.

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