



The Holy See

MORNING MASS IN THE CHAPEL OF THE
DOMUS SANCTAE MARTHAEHOMILY OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS

"God always acts in simplicity

Monday, 16 March 2020

[[Multimedia](#)]

Introduction

Let us continue to pray for the sick. I am thinking of families, who are cooped up, children who do not go to school, perhaps parents who cannot go out; some will be in quarantine. May the Lord help them to discover new ways, new expressions of love, of living together in this new situation. It is a beautiful opportunity to creatively rediscover true affection in the family. Let us pray for the family, that relationships within the family at this time may always flourish for good.

Homily

In both texts that today's Liturgy has us meditate on (cfr *2 Kings* 5:1-15; *Lk* 4:24-30) there is an attitude that attracts attention, a human attitude, but not a good spirit: indignation. The people of Nazareth began to listen to Jesus, they liked how He spoke, but then someone asked: "Which university did this man study at? This is the son of Mary and Joseph! This man is a carpenter! What could He possibly have to tell us?" And the people are indignant. They enter into this indignation (cf. *Lk* 4:28). This indignation then leads them to violence. And that Jesus, whom they admired at the beginning of the sermon, is cast out, to be thrown down from the mountain (cf. v. 29).

Naaman too - this man Naaman, was a good man, open to faith - when the prophet sends a messenger to tell him to bathe seven times in the Jordan he is outraged. But why is that?

“I was thinking he would be sure to come out to me, and stand there, and call on the name of the Lord his God, and wave his hand over the spot and cure the leprous part. Surely Abana and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, are better than any water in Israel? Could I not bathe in them and become clean?’ And he turned round and went off in a rage” (2 Kings 5:11-12). With indignation.

There were good people too in Nazareth. But what is there behind these good people that leads them to react indignantly? And in Nazareth, worse: violence. Both the people in the synagogue of Nazareth and Naaman thought that God manifested Himself only in the extraordinary, in things that were out of the ordinary; that God could not act through the commonalities of life, in simplicity. They despised the simple. They became indignant, they despised simple things. And our God makes us understand that He always acts in simplicity: in the simplicity of the house of Nazareth, in the simplicity of everyday work, in the simplicity of prayer... Simple things. Instead, the worldly spirit moves us towards vanity, towards appearances...

Both end in violence. Naaman, who was very educated, slams the door in the prophet's face and takes off – violence, a violent action. The people in the synagogue begin to become agitated, they get angrier and angrier. They make the decision to kill Jesus, however unconsciously, and they drive Him out to throw Him down. Indignation is an ugly temptation that leads to violence.

A few days ago, I was shown a short film, a video, from the door of a building that was in quarantine. There was a person, a young man, who wanted to go out. And the guard told him he couldn't. And he started to punch him indignantly, contemptuously. “And who are you, ‘Negro’, to stop me from going out?” Indignation is the attitude of the arrogant, but of the arrogant with a nasty poverty of spirit, the arrogant who live only with the illusion of being more than they really are. It is a spiritual “class”, those who become indignant. Indeed, very often these people need to become indignant, to feel outraged to feel they are a someone.

This can happen to us too – “the Pharisaic scandal”, theologians call it – that is, being scandalised by the simple things of God, the simplicity of the poor, the simplicity of Christians, as if to say: “But this is not God. No, no. Our God is more cultivated, wiser, more important. God cannot act in this simplicity”. Outrage always leads to violence; either to physical violence or verbal violence, which kills just like the physical form.

Let us think about these two passages: the indignation of the people in the synagogue of Nazareth and Naaman's outrage, because they did not understand the simplicity of our God.