



The Holy See

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

"What happens when Jesus passes"

Sunday, 22 March 2020

[\[Multimedia\]](#)

Introduction

In these days, we hear the news of many deaths: men and women who die alone, without being able to say goodbye to their loved ones. Let us think of them and pray for them. But also for their families, who cannot accompany their loved ones in their passing. Our special prayer is for the deceased and their relatives.

Homily

This passage from the Gospel of John (see 9:1-41) speaks for itself. It is a proclamation of Jesus Christ and also a catechesis. I would like only to highlight one thing. There is a phrase of Saint Augustine that has always struck me: "I fear Christ when He passes" - "*Timeo Dominum Transeuntem*". "I am afraid that Jesus will pass". "But why are you afraid of the Lord? - "I am afraid of not being aware that it is Christ, and letting Him pass by". One thing is clear: In Jesus' presence, the heart's true sentiments flourish, true attitudes emerge. It is a grace and so Augustine was afraid he might let Him pass by without realising He was passing.

It is clear here: He heals a blind man and a scandal ensues. Then, the best and the worst of people comes out. The blind man, the wisdom of the blind man, the way he responds is surprising. He was used to moving with his hands, he could sense danger, he could sense dangerous things that might make him slip. And he moves like a blind man. He uses clear, precise argumentation,

and then he even uses irony, he permits himself this luxury.

The doctors of the Law knew all the laws, all of them, all of them. But they were fixed there. They did not understand when God was passing by. They were rigid, attached to their habits. Jesus Himself says so, in the Gospel: attached to habits. And if in order to conserve these habits, they had to commit an injustice, it wasn't a problem, because the habits said that was not justice; and that rigidity led them to commit injustices. That narrow-mindedness came out in front of Christ.

Only this. I advise you all to take the Gospel today, chapter 9 of the Gospel of *John*, and to read it, at home, calmly. Once, twice, to understand well what happens when Jesus passes: that the sentiments come out. To understand well what Augustine tells us: I am afraid of the Lord when He passes, that I will not realise and I will not recognise Him. And I will not convert. Do not forget: read chapter 9 of *John* once, twice, three times, taking all the time you like.

Prayer for spiritual communion

My Jesus, I believe that You are present in the Most Blessed Sacrament. I love you above all things, and I desire to receive You into my soul. Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace You as if you were already there, and I unite myself wholly to You. Never permit me to be separated from You.