



# The Holy See

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MORNING MASS IN THE CHAPEL OF THE  
*DOMUS SANCTAE MARTHAE*

*HOMILY OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS*

"Trust in God's mercy"

*Monday, 30 March 2020*

[\[Multimedia\]](#)

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## Introduction

Let us pray today for the many people who are not succeeding in coping and remain in fear because of the pandemic. May the Lord help them to arise, to have the strength to cope for the good of society and the entire community.

## Homily

In the Responsorial Psalm we recited the prayer: "The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want; Fresh and green are the pastures where He gives me repose. Near restful waters He leads me, to revive my drooping spirit. He guides me along the right path; He is true to His name. If I should walk in the valley of darkness no evil would I fear. You are there with your crook and your staff; with these you give me comfort" (*Ps 23:1,4*).

This is the experience of the two women, whose story we read in the two Readings. An innocent woman, falsely accused, calumniated, and a sinful woman. Both of them condemned to death. The innocent and the sinful. The Fathers of the Church saw a figure of the Church in these women: holy but with sinful children. They would use a beautiful Latin expression: the Church is the '*casta meretrix*' – the holy Church with her sinful children. Both women were desperate,

humanly desperate. Susanna trusts in the Lord.

There are also two groups of people, of men; both groups had positions in the church: the judges and the Doctors of the Law. They were not ecclesiastics but they were at the service of the Church, in the tribunal and in the teaching of the Law. Different. Those who accused Susanna were corrupt: the corrupt judge, the emblematic figure in history. Also in the Gospel, Jesus takes up, in the parable of the persistent widow, the corrupt judge who did not believe in God and did not care about others. The corrupt. The Doctors of the Law were not corrupt, but hypocrites.

And these women, one fell into the hands of hypocrites, the other into the hands of the corrupt. There was no way out. "If I should walk in the valley of darkness no evil would I fear. You are there with your crook and your staff; with these you give me comfort" (*Ps 23:4*). Both women were in a valley of darkness, they were heading there: a valley of darkness, toward death. The first, explicitly entrusts herself to the Lord, and the Lord intervenes. The second, poor woman, knows she is guilty. She is ashamed in front of all the people - because there were people present in both situations. The Gospel does not say it, but surely she was praying inside, asking for some type of help.

What does the Lord do with these people? He saves the innocent woman, he does her justice. He forgives the sinful woman. He condemns the corrupt judges. He helps the hypocrites convert themselves and before other people Jesus says: "Really? Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone" (see *Jn 8:7*), and one by one they went away. The Apostle John says, with a touch of irony: "When they heard this, they went away one by one beginning with the eldest" (*Jn 8:9*). He allows a time in which they can repent. He does not forgive the corrupt ones, simply because the corrupt person is incapable of asking for forgiveness, he has gone beyond that point. He is tired... no, it is not that he is tired, but it is that he is not capable. Corruption has taken away from him that capacity that all of us have to be ashamed, to ask for forgiveness. No, those who are corrupt are sure of themselves, they go ahead and destroy and continue to exploit people such as this woman, everything, everything... they keep going. They put themselves in place of God.

The Lord responds to the women. He frees Susanna from the corrupt men, He makes her go forward. To the other: "Neither do I condemn you. Go, and sin no more" (*Jn 8:11*). He allows her to go. And [He does] this in front of the people. In the first case they praise God, in the second case the people learn. They learn about God's mercy.

Each one of us has our own story. Each one of us has our own sins. And if we do not remember, think about them: we will find them. Thank God if you find them, because if you do not find them, you are corrupt. Each one of us has his or her own sins. Let us look to the Lord, who does justice, but who is extremely merciful. Let us not be ashamed to be in the Church: let us be ashamed of being sinners. The Church is Mother to all. Let us thank God that we are not corrupt, that we are sinners. May each one of us, seeing how Jesus acted in these cases, entrust ourselves to God's

mercy and pray, trusting in God's mercy, asking for forgiveness because God “guides me along the right path; He is true to His name. If I should walk in the valley of darkness no evil would I fear. You are there with your crook and your staff; with these you give me comfort.” (*Ps 23:1:4*).

### **Spiritual Communion**

Those who cannot receive Communion can now make a spiritual communion.

At Your feet, O my Jesus, I prostrate myself and I offer You repentance of my contrite heart, which is humbled in its nothingness and in Your holy presence. I adore You in the Sacrament of Your love, the ineffable Eucharist. I desire to receive You into the poor dwelling that my heart offers You. While waiting for the happiness of sacramental communion, I wish to possess You in spirit. Come to me, O my Jesus, since I, for my part, am coming to You! May Your love embrace my whole being in life and in death. I believe in You, I hope in You, I love You. Amen.