The Holy See

POPE FRANCIS MORNING MEDITATION IN THE CHAPEL OF THE

DOMUS SANCTAE MARTHAE **The concreteness of Christian love** *Monday, 7 January 2019* [Multimedia]

In order to be true Christians, we need the concrete "apostolic folly of saints", who, through their very lives, were able to help others, Pope Francis said during his homily for the year's first Mass at Santa Marta on Monday morning, 7 January. Referring to the day's first reading (1 Jn 3:22-4:6), he described the First Letter of the Apostle John as a "beautiful challenge: anything we ask of God we will receive, provided we observe his Commandments and do what pleases him". Thus, "the first Commandment, the foundation of our faith", the Pope explained, is "to believe in the name of his Son Jesus and to love one another: these two things".

However, believing in Jesus Christ does not simply mean saying "yes Father, I believe in Jesus Christ", but "means believing that God, the Son of God, became flesh, became one of us". And "this is faith in Jesus Christ … a concrete God".

The concreteness of the first Commandment stems from the concreteness of God. The second Commandment, as well, "is concrete: to love, to love one another: concrete love, not fantasy love", the Pope explained. Thus, the criteria and the challenge of Christianity is concreteness. If "we observe these two Commandments, we remain in God ... and he remains in us", the Pope stressed.

This concreteness should be accompanied by "spiritual vigilance" to help us discern Truth and be on guard from Satan, "who always tries to distance us from Jesus". Indeed, "at the end of the day, Christians should put aside two, three, five minutes and ask themselves: 'what happened in my heart today?'". We should not be afraid of this, nor of being helped by the "People of God, the Church, the unanimity of the Church, the brother, the sister who has the charism to help us see things clearly".