



## The Holy See

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**POPE FRANCIS** MORNING MEDITATION IN THE CHAPEL OF THE  
*DOMUS SANCTAE MARTHA* **Defeating the hardness of hearts** Thursday, 17 January  
2019 [\[Multimedia\]](#)

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(by: *L'Osservatore Romano*, weekly edition, n.4, 25/01/2019)

Taking his cue from the day's reading from the Letter to the Hebrews (3:7-14), in his homily at Santa Marta on Thursday, 17 January, the Holy Father warned against slipping toward an "evil heart", and advised the faithful to seek "to grow" through God's Word and openness to the "action of the Holy Spirit". Citing the passage, "take care, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God" (v. 12), Pope Francis noted that this was a harsh thing to say to a Christian community. However, he added, we all run the risk of "slowly slipping toward an evil heart".

Three words, he observed, can help us to better comprehend the meaning behind the Letter: "hardness" of heart, "stubbornness" and "seduction", and thus understand if we are slipping toward an evil heart. "Jesus had found people who were closed to his message, everywhere" and he was "saddened by their hardness", by closed and hardened hearts. The Pope then explained that this hardness can enter our lives for many reasons ... for example, great suffering: "suffering hardens" the heart. He invited the faithful to ask themselves whether they have a hardened or closed heart and whether they are afraid to allow it to grow.

The second word is spiritual "stubbornness" which occurs when one is closed within one's own ideas and defends them. Those who are obstinate are "not open to the Holy Spirit: they are ideologues". And the question on which everyone should reflect is: "Do I have a stubborn heart?".

The third word is "seduction", our daily battle against the temptations of the devil. It is the evil heart that allows us to be seduced, leading to stubbornness and closure. The Holy Father concluded by suggesting that we "ask the Holy Spirit to enlighten us so as not to have an evil heart".

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