



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC JOURNEY OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS

TO MEXICO

(12-18 FEBRUARY 2016)

**HOLY MASS WITH PRIESTS, MEN AND WOMEN RELIGIOUS,
CONSECRATED PEOPLE AND SEMINARIANS**

HOMILY OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS

“Venustiano Carranza” Stadium, Morelia

Tuesday, 16 February 2016

[Multimedia]

There is a saying among us which goes: “tell me how you pray, and I will tell you how you live; tell me how you live and I will tell you how you pray. Because showing me how you pray, I will learn to find the God for whom you live, and showing me how you live, I will learn to believe in the God to whom you pray”. For our life speaks of prayer and prayer speaks of our life; Praying is something learned, just as we learn to walk, to speak, to listen. The school of prayer is the school of life and in the school of life we progress in the school of prayer.

Paul said to his favourite disciple Timothy, while teaching or encouraging him to live the faith: “Remember your mother and your grandmother”. And seminarians, when entering seminary, often used to tell me: “Father, I would like to have deeper mental prayer”. “Look, you carry on praying as they taught you to at home and then later, little by little, your prayer will mature, just as you grew up”. Praying is something learned, just like life.

Jesus wished to introduce his companions into the mystery of Life, into the mystery of His life. He showed them by eating, sleeping, curing, preaching and praying, what it means to be Son of God. He invited them to share his life, his interiority, and in his presence among them he allowed them to touch, in his flesh, the life of the Father. He helped them to experience, in his gaze, in his going out in power, the newness of saying “Our Father”. In Jesus this expression “Our Father” has no trace of routine or mere repetition. On the contrary, it contains a sense of life, of experience, of

authenticity. With these two words, “Our Father”, he knew how to live praying and to pray living.

Jesus invites us to do the same. Our first call is to experience this merciful love of the Father in our lives, in our experiences. His first call is to introduce us into the new dynamic of love, of sonship. Our first calling is to learn to say, “Our Father”, as Paul insists: *Abba*.

“Woe to me if I do not preach the Gospel!”, says St Paul, “Woe to me!”. For to evangelize, he continues, is not a cause for glory but rather a need (1 Cor 9:16).

He has invited us to share in his life, his divine life, and woe to us consecrated men and women, seminarians, priests, bishops, woe to us if we do not share it, woe to us if we are not witnesses to what we have seen and heard, woe to us. We do not want to be “administrators of the divine”, we are not and do not want to be employees in God’s firm, for we are invited to share in his life, we are invited to enter into his heart, a heart that prays and lives, saying, “Our Father”. What is our mission if not to say with our lives — from the beginning to the end, as our brother bishop who died last night — what is our mission if not to say with our entire lives, “Our Father”?

He who is Our Father, it is he to whom we pray every day with insistence. And what do we tell him in one of the petitions of that prayer? Lead us not into temptation. Jesus himself did the same thing. He prayed that his disciples — yesterday’s and today’s — would not fall into temptation. What could be one of the sins which besets us? What could be one of the temptations which springs up not only in contemplating reality but also in living it? What temptation can come to us from places often dominated by violence, corruption, drug trafficking, disregard for human dignity, and indifference in the face of suffering and vulnerability? What temptation might we suffer over and over again — we who are called to the consecrated life, to the presbyterate, to the episcopate — what temptation might we endure in the face of all this, in the face of this reality which seems to have become a permanent system?

I think that we could sum it up in a single word: “resignation”. And faced with this reality, the devil can overcome us with one of his favourite weapons: resignation. “And what are you going to do about it? Life is like that”. A resignation which paralyzes us and prevents us not only from walking, but also from making the journey; a resignation which not only terrifies us, but which also entrenches us in our “sacristies” and false securities; a resignation which not only prevents us from proclaiming, but also inhibits our giving praise and takes away the joy, the joy of giving praise. A resignation which not only hinders our looking to the future, but also stifles our desire to take risks and to change. And so, “Our Father, lead us not into temptation”.

How good it is for us to tap into our memories when we are tempted. How much it helps us to look at the “stuff” of which we are made. It did not all begin with us, nor will it all end with us, and so it does us good to look back at our past experiences which have brought us to the present.

And in this remembering, we cannot overlook someone who loved this place so much, who made himself a son of this land. We cannot overlook that person who could say of himself: “They took me from the tribunal and put me in charge of the priesthood for my sins. Me, useless and quite unable to carry out such a great undertaking; me, who didn’t know how to use an oar, they chose me to be the first Bishop of Michoacán” (Vasco Vázquez de Quiroga, *Pastoral Letter*, 1554). I wish to add here my thanks to the Cardinal Archbishop who had the idea of me celebrating this Mass with the pastoral staff and the chalice that belonged to the first Bishop.

With you, I would like to recall this evangelizer, first known as “the Spaniard who became an Indian”.

The situation of the Purhépechas Indians, whom he described as being “sold, humiliated, and homeless in marketplaces, picking up scraps of bread from the ground”, far from tempting him to listless resignation, succeeded in kindling his faith, strengthening his compassion and inspiring him to carry out plans that were a “breath of fresh air” in the midst of so much paralyzing injustice. The pain and suffering of his brothers and sisters became his prayer, and his prayer led to his response. And among the Indians, he was known as “Tata Vasco”, which in the Purhépechan language means, father, dad, tata, daddy....

It is to this prayer, to this expression, that Jesus calls us.

Father, dad, daddy... lead us not into the temptation of resignation, lead us not into the temptation of falling into sloth, lead us not into the temptation of losing our memory, lead us not into the temptation of forgetting our elders who taught us by their lives to say, “Our Father”.