



The Holy See

POPE FRANCIS

MORNING MEDITATION IN THE CHAPEL OF THE
DOMUS SANCTAE MARTHAE

God chooses the little ones

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In his homily at Holy Mass, Pope Francis commented on the day's first Reading from 1 Samuel (16:1-13a), which recounts the anointing of David. "The Lord's relationship with his people," the Pope began, "is a personal relationship, always. It is a person to person relationship. He is the Lord, and the people have a name. Persons have a name. It is not a dialogue between the Almighty and the masses". Rather, it is something "personal". "Persons are organized as a people, and the dialogue is with the people; and in a people, each person has a place".

For this reason, he said, "the Lord never speaks to the people as to 'the masses'; rather, "he always speaks to them personally", calling each person by name. The Pope then added that the Lord also "chooses personally", and he cited the example of the account of Creation. "The same Lord, who fashions man with an artist's hands, gives him a name: 'you will be called Adam'. And so began the relationship between God and the human person".

Pope Francis then pointed out another fundamental aspect: "A relationship exists between God and us, we who are little. God is great and we are little", and so "when God wants to choose people, also his people, he always chooses the little ones". So much so, the Pope added, that "he says to his people: I chose you because you are the littlest, those with the least power among all the peoples".

The supreme example of this “dialogue between God and human littleness”, he said, is to be found in “Our Lady, in she who said: ‘the Lord has looked upon my lowliness, he has looked upon those who are little, he has chosen the little ones’”.

“In today’s first Reading, we see this attitude of the Lord shine through. As Samuel stands before Jesse’s eldest son, he says: ‘Surely the Lord’s anointed is before him!’ For he was a tall man”. However, he added, the Lord says to Samuel: “Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for the Lord sees not as man sees; man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart”.

Therefore, Pope Francis said, “the Lord chooses according to his own criteria”. That is why “in the prayer at the beginning of the Mass, in looking to St Agnes, we prayed: ‘You, Lord, who choose what is weak in the world to confound the strong...’”.

“The Lord chooses David, the youngest, who didn’t matter even to his father. He thought he wasn’t at home, and perhaps he’d said to him: go look after the sheep because we need to finalize a great affair here and you don’t matter”. And yet it was David, the youngest, “who was chosen” by the Lord and anointed by Samuel.

“All of us, by virtue of our baptism, have been chosen by the Lord; we are all chosen. He has chosen us one by one. He has given us a name. And he looks upon us. There is a dialogue, because this is the way the Lord loves”.

However, as the Pope went on to note, although David was chosen and became king, “he erred” and “perhaps he made many, many mistakes”. The Bible, he said, recounts “two weighty mistakes”. Yet “what did David do?” the Pope asked. “He humbled himself, he returned to his littleness and said: I am a sinner! He asked for forgiveness and did penance”.

Thus, “after the second sin, when he wanted to see how strong the people were, the Lord made him see that the census was an act of pride”. And David said: “But punish me and not the people! The people are not at fault, I am the one who is guilty!” In doing so, “David kept watch over his littleness: through repentance, through prayer”. And even with tears. For, “as he fled from his enemies he wept, and said: perhaps the Lord will see my tears and have pity on us”.

The Pope then asked: “Where is Christian faithfulness to be found?”. And he answered: “Christian faithfulness, our faithfulness, is simply a matter of guarding over our littleness so that it may remain in dialogue with the Lord”. “Lowliness, humility, meekness are so important in the life of a Christian: they are guardians of littleness”. They are the basis for continuing “the dialogue between our littleness and the greatness of the Lord”.

Pope Francis concluded his homily with a prayer: “May the Lord grant us, through the intercession

of Our Lady — who joyfully sang to God, for he had looked upon her lowliness — the grace of keeping watch over our littleness in his sight”.