



The Holy See

PASTORAL VISIT TO THE ROMAN PARISH
OF "SANTA MARIA DELL'ORAZIONE"

HOMILY OF POPE FRANCIS

Second Sunday of Lent, 16 March 2014

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In the prayer at the beginning of the Mass we asked the Lord for two graces: “*To listen to Your beloved Son*”, so that our faith might be nourished by the Word of God, and another grace — “*to purify the eyes of our spirit, so that we might one day enjoy the vision of glory*”. To listen, the grace to listen, and the grace to purify our eyes. This is directly related to the Gospel we heard. When the Lord is transfigured before Peter, James and John, they hear the voice of God the Father say: “This is my beloved Son! listen to him!”. The grace to listen to Jesus. Why? To nourish our faith with the Word of God. And this is the duty of the Christian. What are the duties of the Christian? Perhaps you will say to me: to go to Mass on Sundays; to fast and abstain during Holy Week; to do this.... Yet the first duty of the Christian is to listen to the Word of God, to listen to Jesus, because he speaks to us and he saves us by his word. And by this word he makes our faith even stronger and more robust. *Listen to Jesus!* “But, Father, I do listen to Jesus, I listen a lot!”. “Yes? What do you listen to?”. “I listen to the radio, I listen to the television, I listen to people gossip”. We listen to so many things throughout the day, so many things.... But I ask you a question: do we take a little time each day to listen to Jesus, to listen to Jesus’ word? Do we have the Gospels at home? And do we listen to Jesus each day in the Gospel, do we read a passage from the Gospel? Or are we afraid of this, or unaccustomed to reading it? To listen to Jesus’ word in order to nourish ourselves! This means that Jesus’ word is the most nourishing food for the soul: it nourishes our souls, it nourishes our faith! I suggest that each day you take a few minutes and read a nice passage of the Gospel and hear what happens there. Hearing Jesus, and each day Jesus’ word enters our hearts and makes us stronger in faith. I also suggest that you have a little Gospel, very

little, to carry in your pocket, in your purse, and when we have a little time, perhaps on the bus ... when it's possible on the bus, because on the bus it's often a bit difficult to keep our balance and guard our pockets, isn't it?... But when you are seated, here or there, you can also read during the day. Take the Gospel and read two little words. Having the Gospel with us always! It was said that several of the early martyrs — St Cecilia for example — always carried the Gospel with them: they carried the Gospel; she, Cecilia, carried the Gospel. Because it is truly our basic meal, it is Jesus' word, which nourishes our faith.

And then the second grace we requested was the grace of *purifying our eyes, the eyes of our spirit*, to prepare the eyes of the spirit for eternal life. Purifying the eyes! I am invited to listen to Jesus, and Jesus manifests himself, and by his Transfiguration he invites us to gaze at him. And looking at Jesus purifies our eyes and prepares them for eternal life, for the vision of heaven. Perhaps our eyes are a little sick because we see so many things that are not of Jesus, things that are even against Jesus: worldly things, things that do not benefit the light of the soul. And in this way, this light is slowly extinguished, and without knowing it, we end up in interior darkness, in spiritual darkness, in a darkened faith: darkness, because we are unaccustomed to looking and imagining the things of Jesus.

This is what we asked today of the Father, who teaches us to listen to Jesus and to gaze at Jesus. To listen to his word, and think about what I was telling you about the Gospel: it is very important! And to see, when I read the Gospel imagining and looking at what Jesus was like, how he did things. And thus our minds, our hearts go forward on the journey of hope on which the Lord places us, as we heard he did to our father Abraham. Always remember: to listen to Jesus, to make our faith stronger; to gaze at Jesus, to prepare our eyes for the beautiful vision of his Face, where we all — may the Lord grant us the grace — will be at a Mass without end. So be it.