



PARISH OF ST. AGATHA

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POPE FRANCIS SUNDAY MASS HOMILY 10/5/20

In Pope Francis' homily this Sunday, he reflected on Jesus's intercessory role before God our Father as described in the Gospel (John 14:1-12). He focused on Peter's description of the role of the Apostles (Acts 6:1-7), which also applies to the role of the Successors of the Apostles, the Bishops. **Their first task, Pope Francis emphasised, is Prayer, then the proclamation of the Word.** He describes Jesus's intercessory caring role before the Father on our behalf. Pope Francis said, *He spoke of the Father as the One who takes care of us just as He takes care of the birds of heaven and the lilies of the field, he said. Jesus is opening the doors of the omnipotence of prayer: 'Whatever you ask in My Name, I will do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything of Me in My Name, I will do it' (John 13-14).*"

PRAYER REQUIRES COURAGE AND BOLDNESS

Pope Francis said how prayer requires courage and boldness when preaching and living the Gospel. Abraham and Moses provide examples. Both **"negotiated"** with the Lord. Abraham, when the Lord told him about the destruction that was to happen to Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen 18:16-33), because of their sinful offensive lifestyle, and Moses, when the people replaced Heavenly God with an Earthly Golden Calf to worship. God offered to make Moses the head of another nation after destroying sinful mankind (Exodus 32:7-14), but Moses and Abraham both interceded on behalf of the People to save them. Through their sincere prayers, God changed His mind.

DEACONS AND BISHOPS

The Pope then turned to the First Reading in which Peter is inspired to create a new service in the Church after the Greek-speaking converts complained that their widows were being neglected. *The apostles didn't have time for all of these things and Peter, enlightened by the Holy Spirit, 'invents' (we can say it this way) the Deacons. This resolved the situation. The people in need could be well taken care of and the Apostles, as Peter said, could devote themselves "to prayer and to the proclamation of the Word".*

A BISHOP'S PRIMARY DUTY IS TO PRAY

Pope Francis then went on to develop the thought that the primary task of a Bishop is to pray. *The Bishop, he said, is the first to go to the Father, with the confidence, the boldness, with which Jesus went in order to fight on behalf of His people. **Something is not right"** Pope Francis said, **if other things take away space for prayer.** He reminded us that it is God who does things, we do very little. God does things in His Church. It is, therefore, prayer that makes the Church progress. This reality is so because Jesus stands before the Father and has promised that whatever you ask in My Name, I will do, so that the Father may be glorified (John 13-14). Pope Francis concluded his homily saying that the Church progresses in this courageous prayer because she knows that without this ascension to the Father, she cannot survive.*

I AM THE WAY, THE TRUTH AND THE LIFE

Jesus tells us today (Jn 14: 1-12) that in His Father's House there are many rooms or places to live in. But first, He will go ahead (Ascension), to prepare a place for His People and then return (Second Coming) to take those found worthy up to Himself, so that where Jesus is, we too, will be with Him and our Father for eternity: in our true Home. In the meantime, Jesus expects us to prepare ourselves on earth, by changing our lives to His Way of thinking, His Truth, His Divine Will and Laws. If these don't suit people now, then living in Heaven will not be possible. The first change is to stop sinning, so our souls will be in a state of Grace worthy to live in the Immaculate House in Heaven. Only those dressed in Holiness and Purity of Heart will be welcome at the Gate. Others will be turned away.

JESUS IS GOD

With the help of Jesus, who is the Way, we can prepare ourselves now on earth, by allowing His Kingdom or His Presence of Love and Mercy to grow and bear a spiritual fruit in our hearts to benefit others. This cultivates a harvest of Heavenly Peace to be enjoyed by everybody. Many replace this Peace in place of their own disordered standards. The disciples were yet to understand that they were in the Presence of God, whose Face is Jesus. Jesus says; **Anyone who has seen Me has seen the Father.** It is a powerful testimony of His Identity as the Trinitarian God. The Word of God speaks from Jesus as He says; **What I speak to you I do not speak of My own accord: it is the Father, living in Me, who is doing His works.** The works He refers to is possible by the Power of the Holy Spirit.

JESUS CAME TO PREPARE US FOR A HEAVENLY LIFE

God came down from Heaven, in the Person of Jesus, inviting us into His Family (Church) by adopting us as His children and giving us a share of Himself, His Divinity, His Priesthood, and His Kingship, in order to begin the process of spiritualising our bodies and minds, to prepare us to become worthy citizens of Heaven. We must share our lives with Him in communion with His Church. It is important we allow Him shape us in the spirit of humility to qualify entry. The disciples did not understand what Jesus meant when explaining where He was going to prepare this place for them and were confused about which Way they were to use?

DO DENY THE TRUTH IS TO DENY OURSELVES HEAVEN

Jesus reveals Himself as the Way, and also as God, who is the Truth and Life. We, as Catholics, have come to know the Truth, the Way and the Life from the Teachings of Jesus, which God expects us to live by on earth. St Peter (1 Peter 2:4-9), tells us that we must align ourselves to His Way. The sacrifices and prayer life we are asked to make will open the Way to Heaven for us and other souls too, when Jesus returns to call us Home, after preparing our room. Will I be prepared to be taken this day? The Way was opened on the Cross, by the soldiers lance, when the Sacraments of Life flowed forth for our spiritual enlightenment and nourishment God bless, Fr. Brendan.