



The Holy See

POPE FRANCIS

MORNING MEDITATION IN THE CHAPEL OF THE
DOMUS SANCTAE MARTHAE

Gods love is an art

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In his homily in the Chapel of Santa Marta, Pope Francis commented on the days Gospel from St Mark (1:14-20). There the evangelist recounts Jesus journey to Galilee following Johns arrest, and the calling of the first of his disciples. Pope Francis noted that, along the way, Jesus proclaims the Gospel with the same words as John: the time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent. The same thing that John had said, Jesus says. John had prepared the way for Jesus. And Jesus follows it.

God in his love prepares the way, and he prepares our lives for each of us, the Holy Father said. He does not make us Christians through spontaneous generation. He prepares our path, he prepares our lives over time. And he added: It seems that Simon, Andrew, James and John were definitively chosen, but that does not mean that from that moment on they were definitively faithful. In reality, he said, they made mistakes; they made non-Christian suggestions to the Lord and in fact they denied him. And Peter more than the others. They became frightened and they left, they abandoned the Lord.

God carries out this work of preparation over the course of many generations. As an example, Pope Francis pointed to Hannah, the second wife of Elkanah, who was described the day's first

Reading from the Book of Samuel (1 Sm 1:8). Hannah, who was sterile, wept while the other wife, Penninah, who had children, derided her. Yet Hannahs weeping was part of the preparation for the birth of the great Samuel. The Lord prepares us over many generations, the Pope said. And when things do not go well, he involves it in the story and sets things aright. In Jesus own genealogy, there are men and women who were sinners, the Pontiff recalled. But what did the Lord do? He entered into their affairs, he corrected the path; he set things aright. We think of the great David, a great sinner and then a great saint. The Lord knows. When the Lord tells us: with eternal love have I loved you, he is referring to this.

Such is the Lords eternal love, the Holy Father repeated. Eternal and yet concrete. His love is an art, he goes along making history and preparing the way for each one of us. And this is Gods love.

The Pope then turned to a group of priests who were con-celebrating the Mass on the occasion of their 60th anniversary of Ordination. He said to them: you are thinking about your 60 years of saying Mass. So many things have happened. So many things. The Lord was there also to prepare the way for others, which we do not know, but he knows. He is the Lord of the preparation, who has always loved us and never abandons us. Perhaps, he said, the act of faith to believe this is not easy, it is true. Because our rationalism tells us: why would the Lord, with all the people he has to deal with, think of me? And yet he has prepared the way for me, by our mothers, our grandmothers, our fathers, our grandfathers, and by our great grandparents, everyone: this is what the Lord does. And this is his love: concrete, eternal and also an art.

Let us pray, Pope Francis concluded, asking for the grace to understand Gods love. But we never truly understand it, eh! We feel it, we weep over it, but to understand it, we cannot understand. This too tells us how great a love this is.