



# The Holy See

---

**POPE FRANCIS**MORNING MEDITATION IN THE CHAPEL OF THE  
*DOMUS SANCTAE MARTHAE*

*The joyful priest*

---

Thursday, 31 January 2019 [\[Multimedia\]](#)

(by [www.osservatoreromano.va](http://www.osservatoreromano.va))

A priest who is true to his vocation can be recognized by the joy he feels and brings to people, Pope Francis said during his homily for Mass at Santa Marta on Thursday, 31 January, the Feast of Saint John Bosco. Indeed the Pope's reflection on the qualities that should distinguish priests drew inspiration from an event from the Saint's life: "On the day of his ordination, his mother said to him: 'you will be a priest, you will begin to suffer'", Pope Francis said. The purpose of this warning and "prophecy" from his humble mother was to let her son know that if he perceived no suffering, then that was a clear sign that "something was wrong". Why should a priest suffer?, the Pope asked. The reason can be found in Don Bosco's life choices. He "had the courage to view reality with the eyes of a man and with the eyes of God". Indeed, Francis noted, "in those Masonic days ... where the poor were truly poor", Don Bosco was moved to seek new avenues, human avenues that could help young people grow.

Moreover, the Pope continued, because Don Bosco "had the courage to look with the eyes of God", he looked "at reality with a father's love" and "at God with the eyes of a beggar who asks for something luminous", in this way moving forward. Priests "must have these two polarities: looking with the eyes of a man and with the eyes of God" which means, the Holy Father explained, spending "ample time before the tabernacle". Don Bosco had these two qualities which helped him to "see the way" and this is why, rather than just imparting precepts, "he drew near" to the people, "with their same liveliness.... He walked with them, he listened with them, he saw with them, he cried with them".

But he warned there "is always the risk of looking too much at the human being and not at all at the divine, or too much at the divine and not at all at the human; however, if we do not take risks in

life, we will never achieve anything”.

Francis thanked God for having given us Don Bosco, who “knew what it meant to earn his daily bread, this man who understood what compassion was, what the real truth was”.

Describing Don Bosco as a “teacher of joy”, Pope Francis said that joyfulness in a priest shows he is doing well and looking at reality both with the eyes of a man and with the eyes of God. “Let us ask the Lord for the intercession of Don Bosco today, for the grace that our priests be joyful”.