



The Holy See

POPE FRANCISMORNING MEDITATION IN THE CHAPEL OF THE
DOMUS SANCTAE MARTHAE

Do not give in to failure

Tuesday, 9 April 2019

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It is possible to prefer failure, desolation and fatigue to healing, comfort and hope, Pope Francis said during Mass at Santa Marta on Tuesday, 9 April. Giving in to complaining and dissatisfaction, is a spiritual illness, he added.

Commenting on the day's first reading (Num 21:4-9) in which the Israelites find themselves in the desert after their exodus from Egypt, the Holy Father retraced the various stages they underwent on their journey to the Promised Land. "They had started out enthusiastically", preparing for their escape, which was followed by the "joy of having left Egypt". This joy then turned into "fear on the banks of the sea". But this fear was overcome with the miracle of the parting of the waters. Following this, the difficult times in the desert led to fatigue as "the people could not bear the journey", and began to complain.

They had thus "lost their memory, Pope Francis observed. Fatigue is selective: it always shows us the bad side of the moment we are experiencing and makes us forget the good things we have received", he pointed out. And finally, the Pope noted, the people distanced themselves from the Lord and gave in to idolatry because the "spirit of weariness takes away hope". The same thing can happen to us "in times of desolation, when results from promises are not immediately noticeable". And that is when we "seek refuge either in idols or in complaints". The "spirit of weariness" also brings with it "the spirit of dissatisfaction".

The attitude of dissatisfaction "is the perfect soil for the devil to sow" and people become

incapable of reaping “a sign of hope”. To illustrate this point, the Holy Father gave the example of the disciples who left Jerusalem, bound for Emmaus, despite learning from the women that the Lord had risen. Indeed, they preferred their own desolation. Many Christians experience this “Christian desolation”, the “temptation to give in to failure” and to “fear solace, fear hope, fear the Lord’s caresses”. Just like the Israelites in the desert, the Pope added, we Christians also at times struggle to endure our journey, choosing to live by complaining, criticising, and experiencing general dissatisfaction. And this desolation, he stressed, is that of the serpent who tempted Eve in the Garden of Eden. Pope Francis concluded by invoking the Lord to “free us from this disease” and calling on the faithful to reject this attitude that prefers failure to hope, healing and consolation.