



The Holy See

POPE FRANCISMORNING MEDITATION IN THE CHAPEL OF THE
DOMUS SANCTAE MARTHAE

Prayers for Politicians

Monday, 16 September 2019

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On Monday morning, 16 September, during his first celebration of Mass at Santa Marta since the summer break, Pope Francis invited the faithful to be close to politicians. The Holy Father's homily was inspired by the day's reading, taken from Saint Paul's First Letter to Timothy (1 Tim 2:1-8) in which the Apostle calls for prayers from the People of God: "I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all men, for kings and all who are in high positions". This universal request is made so that: "we may lead a quiet and peaceable life". And Paul adds, "I desire then that in every place the men should pray, lifting holy hands without anger or quarrelling".

Paul, the Pope explained, "underscores the environment of believers" which is prayer. "Sometimes I feel compassion for those in authority because they receive either praise from their supporters or insults". While he admitted that some priests, bishops and politicians deserve this, he challenged the faithful: "do we leave them alone without asking God to bless them?". Scripture speaks clearly, Pope Francis stressed: prayers "for Kings and for all those in power ... so that we can all live a quiet and peaceable life that is dignified and dedicated to God". However, he continued, "I am sure that there are no prayers for those who govern. Yes they are insulted". He then addressed a question to the faithful related to Italy's recent political crisis: "Who among us prayed for those in government? Who among us prayed for the parliamentarians?... It appears that the patriotic spirit does not include prayer".

The function of parliament is to debate but there is no need to "annihilate the other; indeed one

should pray for the other, for the one who has a different opinion from mine”. “Let us think about this for a while: ‘do I pray for those who govern?’”. Because “praying for those who govern is the first thing we should do, for politicians too”. Although some may object, saying politics are dirty, Pope Francis noted, “Paul VI believed it to be the highest form of charity!”. Politics, the Pontiff explained, “can be as dirty as any profession ... it is we who soil something, but it is not the thing in itself that is dirty”. Indeed, “we must convert and pray for the politicians of all colours, everyone”.

The Holy Father then recalled the Gospel passage in which a centurion prays for one of his servants for whom he felt responsible. “Those in authority too must pray for their people”, as they “are responsible for the life of a country”. The Holy Father concluded his homily by calling on the faithful to undertake an examination of conscience: what do you think about politics? “Do you pray for those in authority? Do you pray for politicians”, the Pope asked, “so that they may carry out their vocation with dignity?”.

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