



# The Holy See

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**POPE FRANCIS**

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

*Christians without joy are prisoners of formalities*

*Tuesday, 28 January 2020*

**[[Multimedia](#)]**

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During his homily at Santa Marta, the Holy Father spoke of the importance of Christian joy as he reflected on the day's First Reading which narrates the joy of King David and of all the people of Israel at the return of the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem. This was the joy at meeting God. The people of Israel felt joyful that God was with them and David expressed his joy by dancing. This, the Pope said was the result of the spiritual joy of encountering the Lord, of his return to his people. We too experience this joy, he said, "when we are with the Lord" in our parishes and villages.

However, one of David's wives reproached him for what she called his vulgar and shameless dancing, a reaction which the Pope described as contempt for "genuine religiosity" and spontaneity of joy at being with the Lord. The wife was punished for this and could not bear any children. Without joy in the heart, the Pope said, a Christian is not fruitful.

The Word of God is "not ashamed of celebration" the Pope said. Indeed celebration is not only expressed spiritually but becomes sharing, he said, and gave the example of David who distributed food to the people after the blessing so they could continue to celebrate at home. He concluded his homily by reminding the faithful of the words of Saint Paul VI who, in his Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, said that the Gospel does not move forward with boring and bitter

evangelizers but rather with joyful evangelizers filled with life.

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