



The Holy See

POPE FRANCIS

MORNING MEDITATION IN THE CHAPEL OF THE
DOMUS SANCTAE MARTHAЕ

Mystery doesn't seek publicity

Friday, 20 December 2013

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In his homily at Holy Mass on Friday morning Pope Francis reflected on the day's Gospel from St Luke (1:26-38), which record the words of the angel Gabriel to Mary: "The power of the Most High will overshadow you. The Holy Spirit will come upon you". The Pope noted that the angel's words harken back to the day's first Reading from the Book of Isaiah (7:10-14).

"Throughout salvation history, the overshadowing of God has always guarded mystery", the Pontiff said. "The overshadowing of God accompanied his people in the desert" and the whole of salvation history, he said, "demonstrates that the Lord has always guarded the mystery. He veiled the mystery, he did not publicize the mystery". In fact, the Pope added, "a mystery that promotes itself is not Christian, it is not a mystery of God". The day's Gospel clearly confirms this, he said, for when Mary received the angel's announcement, "the mystery of her motherhood" remained hidden.

"God's overshadowing of us in our lives", the Pope continued, helps us to "discover our own mystery: our mystery of encounter with the Lord, the mystery of our life's journey with the Lord". In fact, he said, "each of us knows how mysteriously the Lord works in his or her heart and soul. And this is the overshadowing, the power, the Holy Spirit's style, as it were, for veiling our mystery.

This overshadowing in us, in our lives, is called silence. Silence is the cloud that veils the mystery of our relationship with the Lord, of our holiness and of our sins”.

“It is a mystery that we cannot explain. But when there is no silence in our lives, we lose the mystery, it goes away”. Hence the importance “of guarding the mystery with silence: this is the cloud, this is God’s power in us, it is the strength of the Holy Spirit”.

The Pope turned again to the witness of the Blessed Virgin, who lived in this silence for the whole of her life. “I think about how many times she remained silent, how many times she did not say what she felt in order to guard the mystery of her relationship with her Son”. He then recalled how “in 1964, in Nazareth, Paul vi told us all that we need to renew and strengthen, to fortify silence”, precisely because “silence guards the mystery”.

The Pope then gave voice to “the silence of Our Lady at the foot of the Cross”, as Pope John Paul II had done before him. In reality, he said, the Gospel does not report any words from Our Lady. Mary “was silent, but within her heart how many things she said to the Lord” in that crucial moment in history. Likely, Mary would have thought back to the angel’s words regarding her Son: “On that day you told me he would be great! You told me he would be given the throne of David his father and that he would reign for ever! But now look there” at the Cross. Mary, Pope Francis added, “veiled in silence the mystery which she did not understand. And through silence she allowed the mystery to grow and flourish”, thus bringing great hope to all.

“The Holy Spirit will come upon you, the power of the Most High will overshadow you”. The angel’s words to Mary assure us that “the Lord veils his mystery”, the Pope said. For “the mystery of our relationship with God, of our journey, of our salvation should not be aired or publicized. Silence should be its guard”.

Pope Francis concluded with a prayer that “the Lord might grant us all the grace to love silence, to seek it out, to have a heart guarded by the cloud of silence. Thus the mystery growing within us shall bear much fruit”.