



The Holy See

POPE FRANCIS MORNING MEDITATION IN THE CHAPEL OF THE

DOMUS SANCTAE MARTHAE **Coherence, not hypocrisy** Friday, 8 March 2019 [\[Multimedia\]](#)

Pope Francis condemned hypocrisy and not being “coherent”, during his homily at Santa Marta on Friday morning, 8 March. Referring to the day’s first reading from Isaiah (58:1-9), he pointed out that “the prophet makes us understand the difference between what is real and what is formal in our lives”. However, although formal reality is an expression of objective reality, the two should always proceed together, and at times this does not occur. And “when the formal becomes detached from reality, we wind up living only off the formalities of appearances”. The Lord condemns this and advises us to be “very simple in appearances, not to show off our good actions”. Indeed, Jesus tells us to express joy while fasting, to give alms when no one is watching and to pray in private, “in sincerity before the Father”, even in hiding. In short, to avoid being seen and thus judged for these actions as a “just” person.

“Those who seek appearances, never recognize themselves as sinners”, the Pope pointed out. They try to appear as being without artifice. When this difference between reality and appearances exists, the Lord uses the adjective, hypocrite, he pointed out, before suggesting that we begin this Lenten period by asking ourselves the question: “what is my hypocrisy” because it is an issue of not being “coherent”. Indeed, he continued, perhaps the point which young people at the recent Synod on youth stressed the most was the “hypocrisy of many Christians, beginning with us ‘religious professionals’”. “In this”, he continued, “they are right”. In fact, “many Christians, even Catholics who say they are practicing Catholics”, exploit people, the Pope affirmed. “And this is a capital sin”.

Reality must match appearances, he stressed, and we should use this Lenten period as an opportunity to ask the Lord for the strength to humbly move forward without applying “makeup” to our soul which would disguise and hide us from Him. Let us ask the “Lord for the grace to be consistent, to not be vain, to not appear worthier than we are... the coherence between the formal [reality] and [objective] reality, between reality and appearances”, he concluded.

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