



The Holy See

POPE FRANCISMORNING MEDITATION IN THE CHAPEL OF THE
*DOMUS SANCTAE MARTHAE***Ordained Ministry is a gift not a function**

Thursday, 19 September 2019

[Multimedia]

During Mass on Thursday, 19 September, inspired by the presence of a group of priests and bishops on the occasion of their silver jubilee, Pope Francis described ordained ministry as a gift from God. The Lord gazed at us and said “follow me”. It “is not an employment contract”. The Holy Father invited everyone to reflect on the day’s first reading (1 Tim 4:12-16), focusing on the word “gift” and Paul’s message to Timothy not to “neglect the gift you have”. It is not something that has to be carried out, or done. “The act of doing is in second place. I must receive the gift and care for it, and from this flows all the rest: from contemplating the gift. When this is forgotten we take the gift and transform it into a function, he explained, “then we lose the heart of ministry and lose Jesus’ gaze”.

The lack of contemplating “ministry as a gift” results in “all those deviations that we know, from the worst, which are terrible, to the daily ones that make us focus our ministry on ourselves and not on gratitude for the gift and love for the One who gave us the gift of ministry”, the Holy Father explained. He then invited the entire presbyterate to consider their ministry and service as a gift. We should do what we can, he told them, to safeguard this gift: with good intentions, intelligence and “even a little shrewdness”.

Pope Francis conceded that it is human to forget the centrality of a gift, and he offered the example of the Pharisee in the Gospel of Luke who forgot the “gift of courtesy” when Jesus was a guest in his house. The Holy Father concluded his homily with a prayer imploring God to help ordained ministers in the Church to consider their ministry “above all as a gift, then as a service”.

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