



POPE FRANCIS

Homily to New Cardinals at his first Ordinary Public Consistory

ST PETER'S BASILICA, 22 FEBRUARY 2014

“Jesus was walking ahead of them...” (Mk 10:32).

At this moment too, Jesus is walking ahead of us. He is always before us. He goes ahead of us and leads the way... This is the source of our confidence and our joy: to be his disciples, to remain with him, to walk behind him, to follow him...

When we joined to concelebrate the first Mass in the Sistine Chapel, the first word which the Lord proposed to us was “to walk”, to journey with him: to journey, and then to build and to profess.

Today this same word is repeated, but now as an action, an action of Jesus which is ongoing: “Jesus was walking...”. This is something striking about the Gospels: Jesus is often walking and he teaches his disciples along the way. This is important. Jesus did not come to teach a philosophy, an ideology... but rather “a way”, a journey to be undertaken with him, and we learn the way as we go, by walking. Yes, dear brothers, this is our joy: to walk with Jesus.

But this is not easy, or comfortable, because the way that Jesus chooses is the way of the Cross. As they journey together, he speaks to his disciples about what will happen in Jerusalem: he foretells his passion, death and resurrection. And they are “shocked” and “full of fear”. They were shocked, certainly, because for them going up to Jerusalem meant sharing in the triumph of the Messiah, in his victory – we see this in the request made by James and John. But they were also full of fear for what was about to happen to Jesus, and for what they themselves might have to endure.

Unlike the disciples in those days, we know that Jesus has won, and that we need not fear the Cross; indeed, the Cross is our hope. And yet, we are all too human, sinners, tempted to think as men do, not as God does.

And once we follow the thinking of the world, what happens? “When the ten heard it, they began to be indignant at James and John” (Mk 10:41). They were indignant. Whenever a worldly mentality predominates, the result is rivalry, jealousy, factions...

And so the word which Jesus speaks to us today is most salutary. It purifies us inwardly, it enlightens our consciences and helps us to unite ourselves fully with Jesus, and to do so together, at this time when the College of Cardinals is enlarged by the entrance of new members.

“And Jesus called them to himself...” (Mk 10:42). Here is the other action of Jesus. Along the way, he is aware that he needs to speak to the Twelve; he stops and calls them to himself. Brothers, let us allow Jesus to call us to himself! Let us be “con-voked” by him. And let us listen to him, with the joy that comes from receiving his word together, from letting ourselves be taught by that word and by the Holy Spirit, and to become ever more of one heart and soul, gathered around him.

And as we are thus “con-voked”, “called to himself” by our one Teacher, I too will tell you what the Church needs: she needs you, your cooperation, and even more your communion, communion with me and among yourselves. The Church needs your courage, to proclaim the Gospel at all times, both in season and out of season, and to bear witness to the truth. The Church needs your prayer for the progress of Christ’s flock, the prayer which, together with the proclamation of the Word, is the primary task of the Bishop. The Church needs your compassion, especially at this time of pain and suffering for so many countries throughout the world. We want to express our spiritual closeness to the ecclesial communities and to all Christians suffering

from discrimination and persecution. The Church needs our prayer for them, that they may be firm in faith and capable of responding to evil with good. And this prayer of ours extends to every man and women suffering injustice on account of their religious convictions.

The Church needs us also to be peacemakers, building peace by our words, our hopes and our prayers: let us therefore invoke peace and reconciliation for those peoples presently experiencing violence and war.

Thank you, dear Brothers. Let us walk together behind the Lord, and let us always be called together by him, in the midst of his faithful people, our holy Mother the Church.

Pope Francis