
Pope Francis: audience, “fasting is not only losing weight”. It is “getting rid of the superfluous to rediscover the faces of those around us”

“Fasting is not only losing weight: it is giving up the superfluous and going to the essential. It is seeking the beauty of a simpler life”. Pope Francis made these remarks in the catechesis of today's general audience, dedicated to the theme of the desert, on the first day of Lent. “By calling us into the desert, Jesus invites us to listen to what matters, to what is important, essential”, Pope Francis explained: “When the devil tempted Jesus, he said in reply: ‘One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes forth from the mouth of God’”. “Like bread, more than bread, we need the Word of God, we need to speak with God, we need to pray”, the Pope said about the Lenten practices: “For it is only before God that the inclinations of our hearts come to light and spiritual duplicity is exposed. Here is the desert, a place of life, not death, for engaging in a silent dialogue with the Lord gives us life”. “Let us think again of the desert”, he encouraged the 12,000 faithful present in the square: “The desert is the place of the essential. Let us look at our lives: how many useless things around us! We chase a thousand things that seem necessary and in reality are not”. How good it would be for us to get rid of so many superfluous realities, to rediscover what matters, to rediscover the faces of those around us!”, Pope Francis pointed out. “Here again, Jesus gives us the example, by fasting. Fasting is being capable of giving up the superfluous and going to the essential”.

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