
Pope at audience: “Remembrance means being careful because these things can happen again”

An appeal to “be careful because these things can happen again.” Today, marking Holocaust Remembrance Day, Pope Francis concluded the general audience- livestreamed from the library of the Apostolic Palace – with an appeal to the duty of “remembrance”, that the horrors of the Shoah may never happen again. The main theme of today’s catechesis is the prayer with Sacred Scripture “that should not be read like a novel”, and “without ulterior motives, without exploiting it”, said the Pope. “The Bible was not written for a generic humanity, but for us, for me, for you, for men and women in flesh and blood, men and women who have a name and a surname”, the Holy Father pointed out: “when it is received with an open heart” it “does not leave things as they were before.” “A good Christian must be obedient, but he or she must be creative”, Francis said, praising the *Lectio divina*. The Sacred Scripture, said the Pope, is an “inexhaustible treasure.” “*The Word of God goes to the heart*”, said the Holy Father in unprepared remarks, “this is where prayer leads you, because it is a dialogue with God.”

“Every day God passes and sows a seed in the soil of our lives,

We do not know whether today he will find dry ground, brambles, or good soil that will make that seed grow. That they become for us the living Word of God depends on us, on our prayer, on the open heart with which we approach the Scriptures.” “God passes, continually”, the Pope repeated, once again quoting St. Agustin– as in last Wednesday’s General audience -: “I am afraid of God when he passes.” “That he will not listen, or that I will not realize that he is the Lord”, he added. “*It irritates me a little when I hear Christians who recite verses from the Bible like parrots*”, the Pope added impromptu: “But did you encounter the Lord, with that verse? It is not a question only of memory: it is a question of the memory of the heart, that which opens you to the encounter with the Lord. And that word, that verse, leads you to the encounter with the Lord.” “Therefore, we read the Scriptures because they read us”, Francis explained: “*The Bible was not written for a generic humanity, but for us, for me, for you, for men and women in flesh and blood, men and women who have a name and a surname. And the Word of God, infused with the Holy Spirit, when it is received with an open heart, does not leave things as they were before: never. Something changes. And this is the grace and the strength of the Word of God.*” Francis assured: “The Word inspires good intentions and sustains action; it gives us strength and serenity, and even when it challenges us, it gives us peace.

On ‘weird’ and confusing days, it guarantees to the heart a core of confidence and of love that protects it from the attacks of the evil one.”

The Holy Father then delved into the method of *Lectio Divina* that originated in monastic circles but is now also practised by Christians who frequent their parishes. In its practice “we must not slip into subjective interpretations, but we must be part of the living way of Tradition, which unites each of us to Sacred Scripture”, the Pope said. “*A good Christian must be obedient and creative*”, Francis concluded in unwritten remarks: “Obedient, because he listens to the Word of God; creative, because she has the Holy Spirit within who drives her to be so, to lead her on.” “The Word of God is made flesh in those who receive it in prayer”: Francis assured: “The intuition emerges in some ancient texts that Christians identify so completely with the Word that, even if all the Bibles in the world were to be burned, its ‘mold’ would still be saved because of the imprint it has left on the life of the saints.” “This is a beautiful expression”, the Pope added impromptu: “Christian life is at the same time a work of obedience and creativity.” “The Holy Scriptures are an inexhaustible treasure. May the Lord grant to all of us to draw ever more from them, though prayer”, concluded the Pope.

M.Michela Nicolais