



(ZENIT, Vatican City, September 13, 2016) “We are all children of God,” Francis stressed, “And God is the God of peace. There is no god of war. He who makes war is evil; it is the devil who wants to kill everyone. ”

According to Vatican Radio, the Pontiff gave this advice during his daily morning Mass at Casa Santa Marta, as he warned against bad habits that prevent us, even within our families, from truly listening to others and empathizing with them.

Overcoming Our Indifference

As the Jesuit Pontiff drew inspiration from today’s Gospel reading where Jesus brought back from the dead the only son of a widow, Francis highlighted that “an encounter with Jesus overcomes our indifference.”

He also lamented that often when people meet each other, “each of them is thinking of themselves, they can see the other person but are not looking at him or her, they can hear that person but are not listening to him or her.”

“An encounter is something different. It is what today’s Gospel proclaims to us: an encounter; an encounter between a man and a woman, between an only living son and an only son who had died; among a joyful crowd because they had encountered Jesus and were following him and a group of people, weeping, accompanying that woman, who had come out from the gate of the city; an encounter between the exit gate and the entry gate. [The sheepfold]. An encounter that makes us reflect on our way of interacting with each other.”

In the Gospel, the Pope continued, we read that Jesus “was moved with pity.”

When Christ observed something unfortunate, Francis pointed out, he encounters and reacts, never remaining indifferent.

“While if we see something sad, we say ‘what a shame!’ Jesus doesn’t pass by, he is moved with pity. He goes up to the woman for a real encounter and then performs the miracle.”

Restoring Dignity

The Pope, reflecting on this Gospel encounter said, we not only see his tenderness but also the fruitfulness of that encounter that restores people and things to their proper place.

“We are accustomed to a culture of indifference and we must strive and ask for the grace to create a culture of encounter, of a fruitful encounter, of an encounter that restores to each person his or her own dignity as a child of God, the dignity of a living person.

“We are accustomed to this indifference,” he continued, noting, “when we see the disasters of this world or small things: ‘What a shame, poor people, look how they are suffering,’ and then we carry on. An encounter. And if I don’t look, it’s not enough to see, no, (we must) look – if I don’t stop, if I don’t look, if I don’t touch, if I don’t speak, I cannot have an encounter and I cannot help to build a culture of encounter.”

Even in Our Families

The message from today’s reading, said Pope Francis, stems from that encounter between Jesus and his people and we all are in need of his Word and need that encounter with Him.

“In our families, at the dinner table, how many times while eating, do people watch the TV or write messages on their cell phones. Each one is indifferent to that encounter. Even within the heart of society, which is the family, there is no encounter. May this help us to strive for this culture of encounter, just as simply as Jesus did so.”

The Pope stressed to look, listen and meet, rather than just see, hear, and pass by.

“Don’t just say ‘what a shame, poor people,’ but allow ourselves to be moved by pity,” Pope Francis concluded, stressing, “Draw near, touch and say in the language that comes to each one of us in that moment, the language of the heart: ‘Do not weep,’ and donate at the very least a drop of life.”