



(ZENIT, Vatican City, September 18, 2016).- Even if we are tempted to, or it seems easier, we should not be ‘worldly.’

Pope Francis warned against this during his Angelus address in St. Peter’s Square, as he reminded the faithful that Jesus, in today’s Gospel according to St. Luke, said we cannot have two masters.

“Today, Jesus invites us to reflect on two opposing ways of life: the way of the world and that of the Gospel,” Francis said, adding: “The spirit of the world is not the spirit of Jesus.”

2 Masters

Recalling today’s parable, Francis noted that Christians can respond to the world’s ‘astuteness,’ with their own, namely through a gift of the Holy Spirit. “This refers,” the Jesuit Pontiff explained, “to depart from the spirit and values of the world, which the devil likes, in order to live according to the Gospel.”

“And worldliness, how is it manifested?” he asked. “Worldliness is manifested by attitudes of corruption, deception, abuse of power, and constitutes the most wrong road, the road of sin, because one thing brings you to another! It’s like a chain (vicious cycle), even if – it is true – that it is generally the easiest one to follow.”

While admitting the spirit of the Gospel requires a serious style of life, Francis noted that while it is serious it is still not just ‘joyful,’ but ‘full of joy!’ Living according to the spirit of the Gospel, he noted, is serious and challenging, marked by honesty, fairness, respect for others and their dignity, and a sense of duty.

Francis stressed that this is ‘Christian astuteness.’

Cannot Oscillate

“The journey of life necessarily involves a choice between two roads: between honesty and dishonesty, between fidelity and infidelity, between selfishness and altruism, between good and evil. You can not oscillate between one and the other, because they move on different and conflicting logics.”

The prophet Elijah, Francis recalled, said to the people of Israel that went on these two avenues: “How long will you straddle the issue?” (See 1 Kings 18:21).

It is important, the Pontiff underscored to decide which direction to take and then, once you have chosen the right one, “walk it with energy and determination, relying on God’s grace and the support of His Spirit.”

“Strong and categorical is the conclusion of the Gospel passage: ‘No servant can serve two masters. He will either hate one and love the other, or be devoted to one and despise the other.’ (Lk 16:13).”

With this teaching, Jesus now urges us to make a clear choice between Him and the spirit of the world, including “the logic of corruption, abuse of power and greed and that of righteousness, meekness and sharing.”

Like Drug Dependency

Francis pointed out that that behavior and mentality of someone corrupt are like those of a person on drugs: “You think you can use it and stop when you want. It starts with little: a tip here, a bribe over there ... And between this and that, slowly one loses his freedom. Even corruption produces addiction, and generates poverty, exploitation, and suffering.

“How many victims are there in the world today!” he said.

“How many victims of this widespread corruption,” the Pope said. “But when we try to follow the logic of the Gospel, integrity, clarity of intentions and behavior, of fraternity, we become artisans of justice and open horizons of hope for humanity. Through the grace and gift of ourselves to our brothers, we serve the right master, God.”

Pope Francis concluded, saying, “May the Virgin Mary help us to choose at every opportunity and at all costs, the right way, even finding the courage to go against the current, in order to follow Jesus and His Gospel.”

Appeal for Peace

Also, after reciting the midday prayer, Pope Francis recalled his upcoming trip to the Italian hill town of Assisi on Tuesday and prayed that in this world full of war, that all people take some time to pray and work toward peace.

As usual, Pope Francis wished those present a good Sunday, good lunch, and asking those present to pray for him.