



Even though we still are 'incomplete' and 'under construction,' Jesus offers us unconditional love.

According to Vatican News, during the first full day of the Pope and Roman Curia's spiritual exercises, Fr. José Tolentino Mendonça stressed this as he meditated on St. John's Gospel, in the final chapter of the Book of Revelation, when Jesus says: **"Let the one who thirsts come."**

Sunday afternoon, **Feb. 18, 2018, Pope Francis departed the Vatican to participate in his annual Lenten Spiritual Exercises at Casa 'Gesù Divin Maestro' (the Divine Master House) in the town of Ariccia near Rome.** For a week, the Holy Father will remain there praying with members of the Roman Curia. The retreat will conclude on the morning of Friday, Feb. 23. Until then, all of the Pope's activities, including the weekly General Audience, Feb. 21, are suspended.

Originally, the Spiritual Exercises took place in the Vatican, but Pope Francis moved them to the retreat house, 16 miles outside of Rome.

Meditations this year have been entrusted by the Pope to Portuguese priest and Biblical theologian, Father José Tolentino de Mendonça, vice-rector of the Portuguese Catholic University in Lisbon, who is leading the meditations on the theme: "Praise of Thirst."

Jesus, the Portuguese priest reminded the Pope and Roman Curia today, stands before us and repeats the phrase, "Let the one who thirsts come!" He stressed how thirst can teach us.

Despite the Lord's awareness that we are still "incomplete and under construction," Fr Tolentino highlighted, Jesus offers "the water of life," namely

unconditional love.

He noted the importance of us recognizing that we “are the ones who are thirsty” and “just how much we thirst.”

“Do we allow our thirst to be a school of authentic awareness—ours and God’s?” Our thirst goes undetected because it “is painful and is discovered little by little.”

He underlined that as any dehydrated person can affirm, water is the cure. He quoted American poet Emily Dickinson who said: “water is taught by thirst.”

Father Tolentino concluded, reminding Jesus wants us to dialogue with Him about “the most profound dimensions of existence, so that we can meet that thirst present in every human person: thirst for relationship, acceptance and love