



In his homily at Mass in the Casa Santa Marta on Monday morning, Pope Francis said there are two ways of following Jesus: out of self-interest in his miracles or through faith in his word.

Pope Francis at Mass on Monday warned against following Jesus out of self-interest in his miracles rather than through faith in his word. He invited us to refresh our memory of the wonderful things God has done in our lives, so as to respond with love.

Self-interest of the crowd

The Pope reflected on the day's Gospel (John 6:22-29), in which the crowd wanted to make Jesus a king after the multiplication of the loaves and fishes. Jesus, he said, rebuffed them, saying "you are looking for me not because you saw signs but because you ate the loaves and were filled."

Pope Francis pointed out the two elements of Jesus' response. On the one hand, he said, they were seeking Jesus in order to feel his Word in their hearts, that is, out of faith. On the other, they were merely curious to see his miracles. The Holy Father said these were good people but their faith was a little too curious and self-seeking.

Stephen's faith in Jesus

Pope Francis then spoke about another example of faith in Jesus, that of Stephen in the First Reading (Acts 6:8-15). He spoke so clearly, the Pope said, that his interlocutors in the Sanhedrin could not resist his wisdom.

"He followed Jesus without weighing the consequences: 'this works for me; that doesn't'... He was not self-interested. He loved. So he followed Jesus sure in his faith. They laid a trap of slander, and they led him into it. So he was stoned to death, giving witness to Jesus."

Faith or self-interest?

Pope Francis invited us to consider how we follow Jesus. He advised us to refresh our memory of how Jesus has acted in our lives.

“We will find so many great things that Jesus has freely given us, because he loves each one of us. Once I have considered the things Jesus has done for me, I can ask the second question: ‘What should I do for Jesus?’ With these two questions, perhaps we can purify our faith of any self-interest. When I see all that Jesus has given me, my heart generously says: ‘Yes, Lord, I shall give all. I won’t make these mistakes and commit these sins again. I’ll change my life in this way...’ [This is] the road to conversion by love: ‘You’ve given me so much love, so I shall give you my love’.”

Finally, Pope Francis said these two questions can help us to purify our faith of self-interest.

“This is a good test to see how we follow Jesus: ‘Am I self-interested or not?’... ‘What has Jesus done for me in my life out of love?’ And seeing this, ‘what should I do for Jesus?’ ‘How do I respond to his love?’ That’s how we can purify our faith from all self-interest. May the Lord help us along this path.”