



Pope Francis, in his homily at the daily Mass at Casa Santa Marta, **reflects on the hypocrisy of the “just,” who treat their Christianity “like a social habit.”** They do not bring Jesus into their daily life, and so they cast him from their hearts. **When we act like that, the Pope says, “we are Christians, but we are living like pagans!”**

We who are born in a Christian society risk living out our Christianity as “a social habit,” in a purely formal manner, with the “hypocrisy of the just,” who are afraid to allow themselves to love. And when Mass is over, we leave Jesus in the Church; He does come with us when we return home, or in our daily lives. Woe to us! When we do this, we cast Jesus from our hearts: “We are Christians, but we live as pagans.”

Pope Francis was commenting on the day’s Gospel, from St Luke, in which Jesus rebukes the people of Bethsaida, Chorazin, and Capernaum, who refused to believe in Him despite having seen the miracles He performed. In his homily at the morning Mass at Casa Santa Marta, **the Holy Father called on all of us to make an examination of conscience.**

Jesus weeps for those who cannot love

Jesus is saddened at being rejected, **Pope Francis explained, while the pagan cities like Tyre and Sidon, seeing His miracles, “surely would have believed.”** And He wept, “because these people were not capable of loving,” although “He desired to reach all the hearts He met, with a message that was not a dictatorial message, but a message of love.”

Born Christian, but we forget Jesus

We, each of us, can put ourselves in the place of the inhabitants of these three cities, Pope Francis said: **“I, who have received so much from the Lord, who was born in a Christian society, who have known Jesus Christ, who have known salvation,”** I who was educated in the faith. Yet it is so easy for me to forget Jesus. On the other hand, “we think of the news of other people, who, as soon as they heard the proclamation of Jesus, converted and followed Him.” But we’ve grown used to it:

And this attitude is harmful to us, because it reduces the Gospel to a social or sociological fact, rather than a personal relationship with Jesus. Jesus speaks to me, He speaks to you, He speaks to each one of us. Jesus’ preaching is meant for each one of us. How is it that those pagans, as soon as they heard the preaching of Jesus, went with him; and I who was born here, in a Christian society, have become accustomed to it, and Christianity has become like a social habit, a garment that I put on and then lay aside? And Jesus weeps over each one of us when we live out our Christianity formally, not really.

The hypocrisy of the just, and the fear of allowing ourselves to love

If we do this, Pope Francis said, we are a little hypocritical, with the “hypocrisy of the just”:

There is the hypocrisy of sinners, but the hypocrisy of the just is the fear of the love of Jesus, the fear of allowing ourselves to love. And in reality, when we do this, we try to take control of our relationship with Jesus. [We tell Him] “Yes, I go to Mass, but afterwards You stay in the Church while I go home.” And Jesus does not come home with us, does not come into our families, into the education of our children, into our school, into our neighbourhood.

We pretend to have Jesus, but cast Him aside

And so Jesus remains in the Church, Pope Francis said, “or on the crucifix or the holy card”:

Today can be a day for us to make an examination of conscience, with this refrain [from

Jesus]: “‘Woe to you, woe to you,’ because I have given you so much, I have given you Myself, I have chosen you to be Christian, and you prefer a life by halves, a superficial life: a little bit of Christianity and holy water, but nothing more.” When this kind of Christian hypocrisy is lived, what we end up doing is casting Jesus from our hearts. We pretend to have Him, but we have cast him out. “We are Christians,” [we say.] “We are proud to be Christians.” But we live like pagans.

We have been given so much, but are ungrateful

Each one of us, Pope Francis said, should ask ourselves: “Am I Chorazin? Am I Bethsaida? Am I Capernaum?” And, he said, if Jesus weeps, we should ask for the grace to weep with Him, with this prayer: “Lord, you have given me so much. My heart is so hard that it will not allow you to enter. I have sinned through ingratitude, I am ungrateful.” And then, the Pope continued, “Let us ask the Holy Spirit to throw open the doors of our hearts, so that Jesus is able to enter in, so that we not only hear Jesus,” but really listen to His message of salvation, and “give thanks for all the good things that He has done for each one of us.”