



(ZENIT, Vatican City, September 12, 2016) Pope Francis today reiterated a message he gave just last week to new bishops in mission territories: Division is the devil's main weapon against the Church.

The Pope said this at morning Mass at the Casa Santa Marta today, Vatican Radio reported.

Related: [Division Is Devil's Main Weapon, Pope Tells Bishops](#)

Divisions destroy the Church, he said, and the devil seeks to attack the root of unity: the celebration of the Eucharist.

Today's Mass marked the feast of the Most Holy Name of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Commenting on the reading from the First Letter to the Corinthians — where St Paul rebuked the Corinthians for their contentiousness — Pope Francis said, "The devil has two very powerful weapons to destroy the Church: divisions and money." And this has happened from the beginning: "ideological, theological divisions that lacerate the Church. The devil sows jealousy, ambitions, ideas, but to divide! Or greed." And, as happens after a war, "everything is destroyed. And the devil is pleased. And we, naïve as we are, are his game." "It is a dirty war, that of divisions," he repeated. "It's like terrorism," the war of gossiping in the community, that of language that kills":

"And the divisions in the Church do not allow the Kingdom to grow; they do not allow the Lord to be seen as He is. Divisions make you see this part, this one against the other. Always against! There is no oil of unity, the balsam of unity. But the devil goes elsewhere, not only in the Christian community, he goes right to the root of Christian unity. And this happens here, in the city of Corinth, to the Corinthians. Paul rebukes them precisely because divisions arise, right at the heart of unity, that is, in the Eucharistic celebration."

In the case of Corinth, riches make divisions between the rich and the poor precisely during the Eucharist. Jesus, the Pope said, "prayed to the Father for unity.

But the devil seeks to destroy it" even there:

"I ask you to do everything possible to not destroy the Church with divisions; they are ideological, they come from greed and ambition, they come from jealousy. And above all to pray, and to keep the founts, the very roots of the unity of the Church, which is the Body of Christ; which we, every day, celebrate [in] His sacrifice in the Eucharist."

Saint Paul speaks about the divisions among the Corinthians, two thousand years ago:

"Paul could say this to all of us today, to the Church of today. 'Brothers, in this I cannot praise you, because you are gathered together not for the better, but for the worse!' But the Church gathers everyone together — for the worse, for divisions: for the worse! To soil the Body of Christ in the Eucharistic celebration! And the same Paul tells us, in another passage: 'He who eats and drinks the Body and the Blood of Christ unworthily, eats and drinks his own condemnation.' Let us ask the Lord for the unity of the Church, that there may not be divisions. And for unity also in the root of the Church, which is precisely the sacrifice of Christ, which we celebrate every day."

Among those present at the day's Mass was Archbishop Arturo Antonio Szymanski Ramírez, the Archbishop emeritus of San Luis Potosí in Mexico, who turned 95 in January. Pope Francis noted his presence at the beginning of his homily, recalling that the Archbishop had taken part in the Second Vatican Council, and that he still helps in a parish. The Holy Father had received Archbishop Szymanski in an audience on Friday.

Readings provided by the [US bishops' conference](#):

Monday of the Twenty-fourth Week in Ordinary Time

Lectionary: 443

Reading 1 [1 COR 11:17-26, 33](#)

Brothers and sisters:

In giving this instruction, I do not praise the fact that your meetings are doing more harm than good. First of all, I hear that when you meet as a Church

there are divisions among you,
and to a degree I believe it;
there have to be factions among you
in order that also those who are approved among you
may become known.
When you meet in one place, then,
it is not to eat the Lord's supper,
for in eating, each one goes ahead with his own supper,
and one goes hungry while another gets drunk.
Do you not have houses in which you can eat and drink?
Or do you show contempt for the Church of God
and make those who have nothing feel ashamed?
What can I say to you? Shall I praise you?
In this matter I do not praise you.

For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you,
that the Lord Jesus, on the night he was handed over,
took bread and, after he had given thanks,
broke it and said, "This is my Body that is for you.
Do this in remembrance of me."
In the same way also the cup, after supper, saying,
"This cup is the new covenant in my Blood.
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."
For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup,
you proclaim the death of the Lord until he comes.

Therefore, my brothers and sisters,
when you come together to eat, wait for one another.

Responsorial Psalm [PS 40:7-8A, 8B-9, 10, 17](#)

R. (1 Cor 11:26b) Proclaim the death of the Lord until he comes again.
Sacrifice or oblation you wished not,
but ears open to obedience you gave me.
Burnt offerings or sin offerings you sought not;
then said I, "Behold I come."
R. Proclaim the death of the Lord until he comes again.
"In the written scroll it is prescribed for me,
To do your will, O my God, is my delight,
and your law is within my heart!"

R. Proclaim the death of the Lord until he comes again.
I announced your justice in the vast assembly;
I did not restrain my lips, as you, O LORD, know.
R. Proclaim the death of the Lord until he comes again.
May all who seek you
exult and be glad in you
And may those who love your salvation
say ever, "The LORD be glorified."
R. Proclaim the death of the Lord until he comes again.

Alleluia [JN 3:16](#)

R. Alleluia, alleluia.
God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son,
so that everyone who believes in him might have eternal life.
R. Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel [LK 7:1-10](#)

When Jesus had finished all his words to the people,
he entered Capernaum.
A centurion there had a slave who was ill and about to die,
and he was valuable to him.
When he heard about Jesus, he sent elders of the Jews to him,
asking him to come and save the life of his slave.
They approached Jesus and strongly urged him to come, saying,
"He deserves to have you do this for him,
for he loves our nation and he built the synagogue for us."
And Jesus went with them,
but when he was only a short distance from the house,
the centurion sent friends to tell him,
"Lord, do not trouble yourself,
for I am not worthy to have you enter under my roof.
Therefore, I did not consider myself worthy to come to you;
but say the word and let my servant be healed.
For I too am a person subject to authority,
with soldiers subject to me.
And I say to one, 'Go,' and he goes;
and to another, 'Come here,' and he comes;
and to my slave, 'Do this,' and he does it."
When Jesus heard this he was amazed at him
and, turning, said to the crowd following him,

"I tell you, not even in Israel have I found such faith."
When the messengers returned to the house,
they found the slave in good health.