



Speaking and acting. Sand and rock. High and low. Pope Francis based his homily at the daily Mass on these three contrasts.

Pope Francis in his homily on Thursday focused on three pairs of words, drawn from the day's Scripture readings: **speaking and acting; sand and rock; high and low.**

Speaking and acting

The first pair, “to say and to do,” distinguishes two contrasting approaches to the Christian life:

Speaking is a way of believing, but very superficial, a halfway journey: I say that I am a Christian but I don't act like a Christian. To put it simply, it's a little bit like dressing up as a Christian: only saying the words is a kind of deception, speaking without doing. Jesus' proposal is concrete, always concrete. When someone drew near and asked for advice, [He always suggested] concrete things. The works of mercy are concrete.

Sand and rock

The second pair of words are also expressed as direct opposites. Sand is “not solid,” it is a consequence of speaking” but not acting; of dressing up like a Christian. But it is a life constructed without foundations.

The rock, on the other hand, is the Lord:

He is the strength. But many times, those who trust in the Lord are not seen, do not have success, they are hidden... but they are steady. He doesn't place his hope in speaking, in vanity, in pride, in the ephemeral powers of life, [but] in the Lord, the rock. The concreteness of the Christian life makes us go forward and build on the rock that is God, that is Jesus; on the solid ground of the divinity. Not on appearances or vanities, pride, recommendations... No. [On] the truth.

High and low

The Pope then turns to the third pair of terms, high and low, which contrasts the path of the proud and the vain, on the one hand, with the footsteps of the humble on the other. Quoting the reading from the Prophet Isaiah, Pope Francis noted that the Lord, "humbles those in high places, and the lofty city he brings down; He tumbles it to the ground, levels it with the dust. It is trampled underfoot by the needy, by the footsteps of the poor."

This passage from the Prophet Isaiah has the air of the Magnificat, the song of our Lady: The Lord raises the humble, those who are in the concreteness of every day, and beats down the proud, those who build their lives on vanity, pride... these things do not last.

Questions for Advent

In this period of Advent, the Pope said, it would be helpful to ask ourselves certain crucial questions: "Am I a Christian of words, or of deeds?" "Am I building my life on the rock of God, or on the sand of worldliness, of vanity?" "Am I humble, always trying to go along the lowly path, without pride, so as to serve the Lord?"