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Francis returns to mercy of God theme

Thomas C. Fox | Sep. 15, 2013 The Francis Chronicles

Pope Francis returned yet again to the theme of the endless mercy of God in his Sunday Angelus address. After six months, it's fair to say this theme rests at the heart of his pontificate.

In his very first Angelus March 17 at the Vatican's parish church of St. Anne's, he spoke of mercy: "For me, and I say this humbly, the strongest message of the Lord is mercy," he told the parishioners. On that day, he said God never stops forgiving, but people often stop going to God for forgiveness, adding that one should never stop asking for forgiveness as it is always given.

Forgiveness is the core Christian message, Francis maintains.

Speaking Sunday from the papal apartments above St Peter's Square, Francis, taking his inspiration from the Gospel of Luke, said Chapter 15 contains three parables of mercy: those of the lost sheep, the lost coin and the story of the prodigal son, Vatican Radio reported. [1] He said all three parables speak of the joy of God, which is the joy of forgiving. Francis went on to say this Gospel shows Christianity at work, and mercy is the true force that can save man and the world from the "cancer" that is the sin, evil, moral and spiritual.

Continuing on the theme forgiveness, Francis said Jesus is all mercy and all love. Each of us, he said, "is the lost sheep, the lost coin, and each of us is the son who has wasted their freedom following false idols, the illusions of happiness, and lost everything." But God, he underlined, "does not forget us; the Father never abandons us. God respects our freedom but remains faithful. And when we return to him, he welcomes us as children into his house because he never stops, not even for a moment, to expect us, with love."

Francis also warned against judging others and judging God because we think he should punish sinners, Vatican Radio went on. Instead, Francis said we should forgive and show mercy. If we live according to the rule "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth," he said we will never overcome "the spiral of evil."

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