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Francis: Don't be 'Christians at half speed'

NCR Staff | Oct. 24, 2013 The Francis Chronicles

Don't be "Christians at half speed," Pope Francis said Thursday in his homily at the chapel in Domus Sanctae Marthae, as reported by Vatican Radio [1]. Use your weaknesses on your road to holiness, he said.

"Really we are weak and many times, many times, we commit sins, imperfections," Pope Francis said.

"Is this the way of sanctification? Yes and no! If you get used to it: 'My life is a bit so-so ... I believe in Jesus Christ, but I live the way I want to.' Oh, no, that will not sanctify, that is wrong! It is a contradiction! If, however, you say, 'I, even I am a sinner, I am weak,' and if you go always to the Lord and say: 'But, Lord, You have the strength, give me faith! You can make me clean,' [and if] you let yourself be healed in the Sacrament of Reconciliation -- yes, even our imperfections are used along the way of sanctification. But it is always a question of 'before' and 'after'."

"Without this awareness of the before and after of which Paul speaks to us [2], our Christianity does not help anyone! More to this: it takes us on the road of hypocrisy. 'I call myself a Christian, but live like a pagan!' Sometimes we say 'Christians at half-speed', who do not take this seriously.

"We are holy, justified, sanctified by the blood of Christ: Take this sanctification and carry it forward! Though people do not take it seriously! Lukewarm Christians [say]: 'Yes, yes, but, no, no'. Neither here nor there -- as our mothers said, 'rosewater Christians' -- no! A little touch here and there, of Christian paint, a little 'paint catechesis' -- but inside there is no true conversion, there is no such conviction as that of St. Paul: 'Everything I gave up and I consider garbage, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him.'"

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[2] http://celebrationpublications.org/dailybread
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