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Francis: The tragedy of Jerusalem is its tepid heart

NCR Staff | Oct. 31, 2013 The Francis Chronicles

Pope Francis preached today on the Gospel of Luke 13: 31-35 [1], which includes these lines:

?Jerusalem, Jerusalem,
you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you,
how many times I yearned to gather your children together
as a hen gathers her brood under her wings,
but you were unwilling!"

The tragedy of Jerusalem, Francis said is not that it didn't know the love of God, but that it knew God's love, but rejected it -- or worse only half accepted it. He said, the heart of Jesus wept for this city that didn?t understand the love of God, for this love that was not fully received.

On the one hand, he said, we have the certainty of the apostle Paul: ?no one can separate me from the love of Christ [2]?. Paul lived through persecution, through illness, through betrayal, but the love of Christ was always at the centre of his life.

Pope Francis contrasted the two images ? Paul, who feels he is a sinner, but finds strength in the love of God, and Jerusalem, with its people who don?t accept the love of God, or worse, who half accept it, depending on their own convenience. So let us ask ourselves, Pope Francis concluded ? do I have a strong love, like Paul, or do I have a tepid heart, like Jerusalem?

Francis celebrated Mass on Thursday in St Peter?s Basilica, inside the St Sebastian Chapel where Blessed Pope John Paul the II is buried.

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