NATIONAL CATHOLIC REPORTER
Published on *National Catholic Reporter* (http://ncronline.org)

Facing the truth about ourselves is a step toward holiness, pope says

Cindy Wooden Catholic News Service | Feb. 18, 2014 The Francis Chronicles
Rome

Being truthful about what is in one's heart isn't always easy, but it is an essential step to living a good and holy life, Pope Francis told members of a parish on the western outskirts of Rome.

"I think it would do us good today to think about not whether our souls are clean or soiled, but to ask, 'What is in my heart? What do I hold inside that I know and no one else does?'" the pope said Sunday during an evening Mass at the parish of St. Thomas the Apostle.

"Facing the truth about ourselves is not easy," he said at the Mass, after having met parish youngsters preparing for first Communion and confirmation, the parents of babies recently baptized, and members of a group for families with children who have disabilities. The pope also heard confessions before the Mass.

Focusing on the day's Gospel reading from the fifth chapter of Matthew, Pope Francis talked about Jesus' warning that speaking ill of someone is like killing them in one's heart and lusting after someone is like committing adultery in one's heart.

"What is in our hearts?" the pope asked parishioners. Is there love or hatred? Is there forgiveness or a desire for revenge?

"We must ask ourselves what is inside because what is inside will come out and does harm if it is evil and if it is good, it comes out and does good," he said.

While it is natural to try to hide one's weaknesses from others, the pope said, "it's very good to tell ourselves the truth and to feel shame when we find ourselves in a situation that is not pleasing to God."

As he did during his Angelus address at the Vatican earlier in the day, the pope also spoke forcefully about the sin of gossip and speaking ill of others. "Whoever insults his brother, kills him in his heart; whoever hates his brother, kills him in his heart; whoever gossips against his brother, kills him in his heart."

At the Angelus, the pope said that gossiping is like eating a candy -- it begins as something pleasurable, "but in the end it fills our hearts with bitterness, and poisons us, too."

"I'll tell you the truth," he told the crowd in St. Peter's Square, "I am convinced that if each one of us would make a resolution to avoid gossip, in the end we'll become saints!"

Source URL (retrieved on *12/28/2014 - 07:48*): http://ncronline.org/blogs/francis-chronicles/facing-truth-about-ourselves-step-toward-holiness-pope-says