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Pope: Too many Christians have watered-down hope, lukewarm faith in God

Carol Glatz Catholic News Service | Jan. 10, 2014 The Francis Chronicles
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There are too many "defeated Christians" in the church who do not fully believe in the faith handed down to them by way of tradition and who do not completely trust in God, Pope Francis said.

If Christians don't believe and live the faith as a victorious mover of mountains, then "there is only defeat, and the prince of the world conquers the world," the pope said in his homily Friday during his morning Mass in the Domus Sanctae Marthae.

The pope focused his homily on a reading from the First Letter of John (5:5-13), in which the apostle reminds Christians that there will be eternal life for those who believe in the name of the Son of God.

"Who indeed is the victor over the world but the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?" the apostle asks.

Whoever remains in God and in his love is victorious over the world, the pope said, according to a report by Vatican Radio.

"Our faith can do anything," he said.

Christians should remind themselves that faith in God is powerful and that faith is what "conquers the world," because "many times we are defeated Christians," he said.

"The church is full of defeated Christians who don't believe in this, that the faith is victorious," he said.

A strong, victorious faith requires professing the faith with all of one's heart and trusting completely in God, the pope said.

"Faith is to profess God," as is done with the daily recitation of the Nicene Creed, he said.

"I believe in one God, I believe in Jesus, I believe ... But do I believe in what I'm saying," the pope asked or are people just reciting from memory, repeating what's being said "like parrots," or saying it only because it has to be recited?

"Or do I believe just some of it?" he continued.

"Profess the faith! All of it!" he said, and protect the faith in its entirety as it has been passed down by way of tradition.

"We know how to ask things of God, how to thank God, but to worship God, praise God, that's something more," he said.

"Only those who have this strong faith are capable of adoration," of worship, he said.

Comparing the intensity of people's ardor in worshipping God to taking someone's temperature, the pope said, "I dare say that the thermometer of the life of the church is a bit low here."

There are few people who have the capacity to really worship "because, in professing the faith, we aren't convinced or we are only partially convinced," he said.

Just as professing the faith allows people to worship and praise God, putting themselves completely in God's hands brings people real hope, Pope Francis said.

"There are many Christians with watered-down hope, not strong, but weak" because "they don't have the courage to entrust themselves to the Lord."

But by professing the faith, protecting it, entrusting oneself to God, "we will be victorious Christians and this is the victory that won over the world -- our faith."

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