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Pope Francis' First Homily

Pope Francis celebrated the first Mass of his Pontificate in the Sistine Chapel, where he was elected Pontiff. In his homily he urges: "Build up the Church, the Bride of Christ."

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"In these three readings I see that there is something in common: it is movement. In the first reading, movement is the journey [itself]; in the second reading, movement is in the up-building of the Church. In the

third, in the Gospel, the movement is in [the act of] profession: walking, building, professing.

Walking: the House of Jacob. “O house of Jacob, Come, let us walk in the light of the Lord.” This is the first thing God said to Abraham: “Walk in my presence and be blameless.”

Walking: our life is a journey and when we stop, there is something wrong. Walking always, in the presence of the Lord, in the light of the Lord, seeking to live with that blamelessness, which God asks of Abraham, in his promise.

Building: to build the Church. There is talk of stones: stones have consistency, but [the stones spoken of are] living stones, stones anointed by the Holy Spirit. Build up the Church, the Bride of Christ, the cornerstone of which is the same Lord. With [every] movement in our lives, let us build!

Third, professing: we can walk as much we want, we can build many things, but if we do not confess Jesus Christ, nothing will avail. We will become a pitiful NGO, but not the Church, the Bride of Christ. When one does not walk, one stalls. When one does not built on solid rocks, what happens? What happens is what happens to children on the beach when they make sandcastles: everything collapses, it is without consistency. When one does not profess Jesus Christ – I recall the phrase of Leon Bloy – “Whoever does not pray to God, prays to the devil.” When one does not profess Jesus Christ, one professes the worldliness of the devil.

Walking, building-constructing, professing: the thing, however, is not so easy, because in walking, in building, in professing, there are sometimes shake-ups -- there are movements that are not part of the

path: there are movements that pull us back.

This Gospel continues with a special situation. The same Peter who confessed Jesus Christ, says, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God. I will follow you, but let us not speak of the Cross. This has nothing to do with it.” He says, “I’ll follow you on other ways, that do not include the Cross.”

When we walk without the Cross, when we build without the Cross, and when we profess Christ without the Cross, we are not disciples of the Lord. We are worldly, we are bishops, priests, cardinals, Popes, but not disciples of the Lord.

I would like that all of us, after these days of grace, might have the courage -- the courage -- to walk in the presence of the Lord, with the Cross of the Lord: to build the Church on the Blood of the Lord, which is

shed on the Cross, and to profess the one glory, Christ Crucified. In this way, the Church will go forward.

My hope for all of us is that the Holy Spirit, that the prayer of our Lady, our Mother, might grant us this grace: to walk, to build, to profess Jesus Christ Crucified. So be it."

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