

God loves us, has dreams for us, pope says

By Cindy Wooden

Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY - God's dreams for his people are the dreams of a lover for his beloved; they are dreams of building a future together that is filled with joy, Pope Francis said.

"Have you ever thought this? 'The Lord dreams about me. He thinks of me. I am in the mind and heart of the Lord,'" the pope said March 16 during his morning Mass in the chapel of the Domus Sanctae Marthae where he lives.

The Lord does not just dream about his creatures, the pope said. "He makes plans: 'We'll build homes, plant vineyards, eat together.'"

Focusing on the day's first reading - an account from Isaiah about God promising his people he will make a new heaven and a new earth, a place where there will always be rejoicing and happiness - the pope said the reading shows how "the Lord dreams. He has his dreams, his dreams for us."

The language is remarkably similar to how an engaged couple dreams of their future: "When we're together, when we're married ...," Pope Francis said.

God's plans, he said, are those that "only someone in love would make."

The fact that God "is in love with us," he said, is something that "I don't think any theologian could explain. It cannot be explained. One only can think about it, hear it and weep for joy."

To believe in God, to have faith, "is to make space for God's love and power," he said. God's power is not a destructive power, but "the power of one who loves me, who is in love with me and wants to rejoice with me. This is faith. This is what it means to believe: Make room for the Lord to come and change me."

Pope Francis also spoke about God's love March 15 when he led the recitation of the Angelus prayer at midday with visitors in St. Peter's Square.

He focused on the Gospel passage John 3:16: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life."

"This is the simplest expression that summarizes the entire Gospel, the whole faith (and) all of theology," the pope said. "God loves us with a free and boundless love."

The cross of Christ, he said, is the supreme proof of God's love, a love that embraces mercy and offers it to all.

In the Sunday reading from St. Paul's Letter to the Ephesians, the pope noted, the

apostle tells the people that God “is ‘rich in mercy’ – never forget this, he is rich in mercy.”

“In the passion and death of his son, he has given us the proof of all proofs: he came to suffer and die for us. So great is God’s mercy! He loves us, he forgives us. God forgives all and forgives always.”

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