

Pope: Putting trust in world, not God, blinds people to needs of others

By Carol Glatz

Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY - When people trust in the world more than in God, their heart becomes numb and their eyes blind to those in need, Pope Francis said.

"Worldliness transforms souls, it makes (people) lose touch with reality: They live in a fake world they have made," he said March 5 in his homily at a morning Mass in the chapel of the Domus Sanctae Marthae, where he lives.

The pope's homily was based on the day's Gospel reading from St. Luke in which Jesus tells the Pharisees the story of a rich man who was unaware that lying at his door was "a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, who would gladly have eaten his fill of the scraps that fell from the rich man's table."

The pope said there was nothing in the passage to suggest that the rich man was bad; on the contrary, the pope said, "perhaps he was a religious man, in his own way. Perhaps he prayed," went to the temple to offer sacrifices, "and gave big contributions to the priests and, with their clerical cowardliness, they thanked him and let him sit at a place of honor."

The problem was that when the rich man left his home, he never noticed the person in need at his door, the pope said, according to Vatican Radio.

"Perhaps the car he used had dark tinted windows to not see out. Maybe, I don't know," the pope teased.

What was certain, however, was that "his soul, the eyes of his soul were darkened," so that "he only saw inside his own life and he wasn't aware of things going on" outside, he said.

The rich man "wasn't bad," Pope Francis said, "he was ill, ill with worldliness," which "numbs the soul" and is difficult to heal.

So many people with difficulties or in need "live next to us," the pope said. "But if my heart is worldly, I will never understand this. With a worldly heart, you cannot understand the necessities, the needs of others" even if you go to church faithfully and pray.

Pope Francis said that is why at the Last Supper, Jesus prayed to God that the disciples not fall victim to "the evil one" and worldly concerns because to do so "is a

subtle sin, it is more than a sin, it is the soul in a state of sin.”

In fact, the rich man ends up in hell after he dies, and he sees Lazarus in paradise with Abraham, showing how there are two forms of judgment: “damnation for the person who trusts in the world and blessings for the one who trusts in the Lord,” the pope said.

Jesus clearly pointed the way to eternal life, he added. The consolation, the pope said, is “we are not orphans. Up until the end, the very end, there is the certainty that we have a Father who waits for us. Let us trust in him.”

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