

Recognize your sin, ask forgiveness, pope says at Mass

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VATICAN CITY – The key problem in everyone's relationship with God is not that they sin, but that they are not ashamed of their sin and don't ask forgiveness, Pope Francis said.

In a homily about St. Peter's relationship with Jesus, Pope Francis said Peter thought he was a good disciple, but ended up denying he even knew Jesus — three times. Later, when Jesus asks him three times "Do you love me?" Peter is hurt by the question and ashamed of his sin, the pope said May 17 during the homily at a Mass in the chapel of the Domus Sanctae Marthae.

"I once knew a priest, a good pastor who worked well; he was named a bishop and felt shame because he didn't think he was worthy, he was spiritually tormented," the pope said. The priest went to his confessor, who listened to him and told him, "Don't be afraid. If with the whopper Peter committed he was still made pope, you keep going."

Pope Francis said that a relationship with Jesus usually follows a pattern; it matures as one is called, recognizes his sin, is forgiven and moves on.

"We are all sinners," the pope said. "The problem isn't being a sinner. The problem is not repenting of our sins, not being ashamed of what we have done. That's the problem."

The pope asked those attending the Mass, including employees of the Vatican Museums, to pray for the grace to encounter the Lord and be purified by him.

"He always seeks us out; he always is near to us," the pope said. "But many times we look the other way because we don't want to talk with the Lord or encounter him."

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