

Pope Francis gives the homily as he celebrates morning Mass in the chapel of his residence, the Domus Sanctae Marthae, at the Vatican Sept. 11. The pope said the devil seeks to reveal sins in order to scandalize the people of God. (CNS/Vatican Media)

Carol Glatz

View Author Profile

Catholic News Service

View Author Profile

Join the Conversation

Send your thoughts to *Letters to the Editor*. Learn more

Vatican City — September 11, 2018
Share on BlueskyShare on FacebookShare on TwitterEmail to a friendPrint

Bishops must remember, particularly when under attack, that their role is to pray, be humble in knowing God chose them and remain close to the people, Pope Francis said in his morning homily.

In fact, a bishop "does not seek refuge from the powerful, the elite, no. It will be the elite who criticize the bishop," while the people show love toward their bishop and confirm him in his vocation, the pope said Sept. 11.

In these times, Pope Francis said, it seems like the devil, "the great accuser, has been let loose and he's got it in for the bishops. True, there are, we are all sinners, we bishops."

The great accuser "seeks to reveal sins, which people can see, in order to scandalize the people" of God, he said in his homily during morning Mass at Domus Sanctae Marthae.

The pope reflected on the day's Gospel reading according to St. Luke (6:12-19), which recounts how Jesus went to the mountain to pray before choosing his 12 apostles — the church's first bishops. But the homily also recognized that bishops named over the past year were in Rome for a series of courses on their ministry.

It was a good moment, he said, to reflect on what Jesus did in that Gospel account — pray, elect others and minister to the multitude — and what it teaches today's bishops.

Jesus' praying for his apostles means Jesus is always praying for his bishops, which is a "great consolation for a bishop during terrible moments," he said.

Advertisement

Bishops are also to be men of prayer — praying for themselves and the people of God, he added.

Since the apostles were chosen by Jesus — not the disciples themselves — "the faithful bishop knows that he did not choose," the pope said. "The bishop who loves Jesus is not a climber who moves up with his vocation as if it were a job."

Instead, a bishop opens a humble dialogue with the Lord saying, "You chose me, and I am not much, I am a sinner." Knowing that God did the choosing and watches over his elect, gives a person strength, he said.

And finally, he said, the fact that Jesus goes down from the mountain to teach and heal the people shows that a bishop is "a man who is not afraid to come down to level ground and be close to the people."

The great accuser, the pope said, "roams the world seeking how to blame. The strength of the bishop against the great accuser is prayer — his own and Jesus', the humility to feel chosen and staying close to the people of God without heading toward an aristocratic life."