

God may scold, but he never slaps, pope says

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God's hands are never used for violence, Pope Francis said.

"I can't imagine God slapping us," the pope said. "Scolding us, yes, that I see, because he does do that, but he never, ever hurts us."

God shows love and tenderness, "even when he must scold us; he does it with a caress because he is (our) father," the pope said in his homily Nov. 12 during his morning Mass in the Domus Sanctae Marthae.

"Let us put ourselves in the hands of God, like a child puts himself in his daddy's hands. That is a hand that is sure," the pope said, according to a report in Vatican Radio.

People should put their trust in God, who is reliable, loving and firm, and brings people life and healing, Pope Francis said.

"Many times we hear from people who don't know whom to trust: 'I put myself in God's hands,'" which is good because it offers "maximum security," he said. "It's the security of our father who loves us very much."

"We have been in God's hands since the beginning," the pope said. The Bible gives "a beautiful image" of God fashioning man from clay with his hands -- "God the artisan," who created humanity and will never abandoned his creation.

And the Bible stories show how, like a father, God accompanied his children, walking with them, holding their hands, he said. God, "our father, like a father with his child, teaches us to walk. He teaches us to take the path of life and salvation."

God also uses his hands to comfort people, the pope said. "He caresses us in times of pain" because "he loves us very much."

That love came with a price when Jesus died for the sins of humanity, he said; "the hands of God are hands wounded out of love and this gives us much consolation."

"We think about Jesus' hands when he touched the sick and healed them. They are the hands of God: They heal us," even healing people's "spiritual sickness."