
Pope Francis: meeting with Roman clergy, “financial and sexual scandals have made us all more cautious”

“In recent years, priests have been affected by financial and sexual scandals. Suspicion has made relationships much more cold and formal; we no longer enjoy the gifts of others; on the contrary, it seems that the mission is to destroy, minimize, fuel suspect”. Pope Francis wrote this in his prepared remarks for the Lenten liturgy with the Roman clergy, read out by Cardinal Vicar Angelo de Donatis. “Before the scandals, the evil one tempts us towards a ‘Donatist’ vision of the Church: the “impeccable” are in, the sinful are out!”, Pope Francis lamented: “We have false conceptions of a militant Church, a sort of ecclesiological puritanism. The Bride of Christ is and remains the field where the wheat and the chaff grow up together until the Parousia. Those who reject this evangelical vision of reality expose themselves to unspeakable and unnecessary bitterness”. Nonetheless, Pope Francis admitted, “the public sins of the clergy advertised in the media have made us all more cautious and less willing to establish meaningful relations, especially when it comes to sharing our faith. There are more and more common events - permanent formation, etc.- but we participate with a colder heart. There is more ‘community’, but less communion! The question that silently comes to our mind when we meet a new brother is: ‘Who really is this man? Can he be trusted?’”.

Valentina Bombelli