
A basic condition for the Preferences to work

Last but not least, what is the ultimate foundation of the whole endeavor of the Universal Apostolic Preferences? Pope Francis indicates it clearly. Before we set off to implement the four Preferences, we are wise to consider what is indispensable for them to bear fruit.

1. As I begin my prayer, I ask for the **Grace**: of growing in devotion to prayer.

2. Jesus warns us in the Gospel.

Remain in me, as I remain in you. Just as a branch cannot bear fruit on its own unless it remains on the vine, so neither can you unless you remain in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever remains in me and I in him will bear much fruit, because without me you can do nothing. (Jo 15: 4-5)

Which of you wishing to construct a tower does not first sit down and calculate the cost to see if there is enough for its completion? (Lk 14: 28)

3. Saint Ignatius, in the Constitutions, explains the principle.

[813] 2. For the preservation and growth not only of the body or exterior of the Society but also of its spirit, and for the attainment of the objective it seeks, which is to aid souls to reach their ultimate and supernatural end, the means which unite the human instrument with God and so dispose it that it may be wielded well by his divine hand are more effective than those which equip it in relation to human beings. ... For these interior gifts are necessary to make those exterior means efficacious for the end which is being sought.

4. Pope Francis, in his letter to Fr. General of Feb. 2019, alerts us again in this particular matter.

“The first preference is capital because it presupposes as a basic condition the Jesuit’s relationship with the Lord in a personal and communal life of prayer and discernment. I recommend to you that, in your service as Superior General, you insist on this. Without this prayerful attitude the other preferences will not bear fruit.”

- How is my personal life of prayer and discernment?
- What kind of supports are needed for us, individually and communally, to develop and sustain a spiritual life that will support the implementation of the Universal Apostolic Preferences?

I consider these questions and talk about them with the Lord.

5. Following my prayer, I reread the **Letter of Pope Francis regarding the Preferences**.