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The Pope's words at the Angelus prayer

Before the Angelus

After the Angelus

At midday today, the Holy Father Francis appeared at the window of his study in the Vatican Apostolic Palace to pray the Angelus with the faithful and pilgrims gathered in St. Peter's Square.

The following is the Pope's introduction to the Marian prayer:

Before the Angelus

Dear brothers and sisters, good morning!

This Sunday's Gospel reading (*Mt 22: 15-21*) presents us with a new face-to-face encounter between Jesus and His opponents. The subject is that of the tribute to Caesar, a "thorny" issue regarding the lawfulness or otherwise of paying taxes to the Roman emperor, to whom Palestine was subject in Jesus' time. There were different positions. Therefore, the question addressed to Him by the Pharisees was, "Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?" (v.17), was a trap for the Teacher. Indeed, according to how He answered, it would have been possible to accuse Him of being for or against Rome.

But Jesus, in this case, answers calmly and takes advantage of the malicious question to impart an important teaching, raising above the controversy and opposing sides. He says to the Pharisees, "Show me the coin for the tax". They show Him a denarius, and Jesus, observing the coin, asks, "Whose likeness and inscription is this?" The Pharisees cannot but answer, "Caesar's". So Jesus concludes, "Therefore render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's" (cf. v. 19-21). On the one hand, ordering the return to the emperor of what belongs to him, Jesus declares that paying taxes is not an act of idolatry, but an

act due to earthly authority; and on the other – and it is here that Jesus gives His “coup” – recalling God’s primacy, asks that He be rendered what is due to Him as Lord of the life of man and of history.

The reference to the image of Caesar, engraved on the coin, says that it is right to consider oneself fully as the citizen of the State, with rights and duties; but symbolically it leads one to think of the other image that is impressed in every man: the image of God. He is the Lord of all, and we, who were created “in His image”, belong first and foremost to Him. From the questions posed to Him by the Pharisees, Jesus draws a more radical and vital question for each one of us, a question we can ask ourselves: *to whom do I belong?* To my family, to the city, to friends, to school, to work, to politics, to the State? Yes, certainly. But first of all, Jesus reminds us, you belong to God. This is our fundamental state of belonging. It is He Who has given you all that you are and that you have. And so our life, day by day, we can and must live in acknowledgement of our fundamental state of belonging, and in our heart, the recognition of our Father, Who created each one of us individually, unrepeatable, but always in keeping with the image of His beloved Son, Jesus. It is a marvellous mystery.

The Christian is called upon to make concrete efforts in human and social realities without opposing “God” and “Caesar”: to oppose God and Caesar would be a fundamentalist attitude. The Christian is called upon to make concrete efforts in earthly realities, but illuminating them with the light that comes from God. Our priority entrustment to God and hope in Him do not imply fleeing from reality, but rather diligently rendering to God what belongs to Him. This is why the believer looks at the future reality, that of God, to live earthly life in fullness and to respond courageously to its challenges.

May the Virgin Mary help us live always in conformity with the image of God that we bear within us, also giving our contribution to the building of the earthly city.

After the Angelus

Dear brothers and sisters,

Matteo Casals, Teofilo Casajús, Fernando Saperas and 106 companion martyrs, belong to the religious Congregation of the Claretians and killed in hatred of the faith during the Spanish Civil War, were beatified yesterday in Barcelona. May their heroic example and their intercession sustain the Christians who in our time too – and in great numbers – in various parts of the world, suffer discrimination and persecution.

Today is World Mission Sunday, on the theme “Mission at the heart of the Church”. I urge everyone to live the joy of the mission, bearing witness to the Gospel in the environments in which each person lives and works. At the same time, we are called to support with affection, concrete assistance and prayer, the missionaries who have set out to proclaim Christ to those who do not yet know Him. I also remember that it is my intention to promote an *Extraordinary Missionary Month* in October 2019, with the aim of nurturing the evangelising ardour of the Church *ad gentes*. In the day of the liturgical memorial of Saint John Paul II, missionary Pope, let us entrust to his intercession the mission of the Church in the world.

I ask you to join in my prayer for peace in the world. In these days I follow with particular attention the situation in Kenya, which I visited in 2015, and for which I pray so that all the country may be able to face the current difficulties in an atmosphere of constructive dialogue, with at heart the search for the common good.

And I now greet you all, pilgrims from Italy and from various countries. In particular, the faithful of Luxembourg and of Ibiza, the Movement of the Family of the Immaculate Heart of Mary of Brazil, the Sisters of Mary Most Holy of Sorrows. I greet and bless with affection the Peruvian community of Rome, gathered here with the holy image of the *Señor de los Milagros*.

I greet the groups of faithful from many Italian parishes, and I encourage them to continue with joy on their path of faith.

And I wish you all a good Sunday. Please, do not forget to pray for me. Have a good lunch, and goodbye.
