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General Audience

Catechesis of the Holy Father

Greetings in various languages

This morning's General Audience took place at 9.30 a.m. in St. Peter's Square, where the Holy Father Francis met with groups of pilgrims and faithful from Italy and all over the world.

In his address in Italian the Pope concluded the cycle of catechesis on the Holy Mass, focusing on the *Concluding Rites*.

After summarising his catechesis in several languages, the Holy Father addressed special greetings to the groups of faithful present.

The General Audience concluded with the recital of the *Pater Noster* and the Apostolic Blessing.

Catechesis of the Holy Father

Dear brothers and sisters, good morning, and happy Easter!

You see that today there are flowers: flowers speak of joy and good cheer. In certain places Easter is also known as Easter in Bloom because the Risen Christ flowers: He is the new flower; our justification blooms; the holiness of the Church blooms. So, many flowers: it is our joy. All the week we celebrate Easter, all week. And for this reason we give, once again, all of us, the wish of a "Happy Easter". Let us say it together; "Happy Easter", all of us [they answer: "Happy Easter"!]. I would also like us to say Happy Easter – because he was

bishop of Rome – to the beloved Pope Benedict, who is watching us on television. To Pope Benedict, we all wish you a Happy Easter [they say: “Happy Easter”!]. And an applause!

With this catechesis we conclude the cycle dedicated to the Mass, which is precisely the commemoration, but not only as a memorial, we live again the Passion and Resurrection of Jesus. The last time we arrived at Communion and the prayer after Communion; after this prayer, the Mass ends with the blessing given by the priest and taking leave of the people (cf. *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, 90). Just as it began with the sign of the cross, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, it is again the name of the Trinity that seals the Mass, that is, the liturgical action.

However, we know well that as the Mass ends, *the commitment to Christian witness opens*. Christians do not go to Mass to do their weekly homework and then forget, no. Christians go to Mass to participate in the Passion and Resurrection of the Lord and then to live more as Christians: it opens up the commitment to Christian witness. We leave the church to “go in peace”, to take God’s blessing to daily activities, our homes, the workplace, and among the occupations of the earthly city, “glorifying the Lord with our life”. But if we leave the Church chattering and saying, “Look at him, look at her...” with a forked tongue, then the Mass has not entered into the heart. Why? Because I am not capable of living Christian witness. Every time I leave Mass, I must leave better than I entered, with more life, more strength, more wish to give Christian witness. Through the Eucharist, the Lord Jesus enters into us, into our hearts and our flesh, so that we may “express in life the sacrament received in faith” (*Roman Missal*, Collect of Monday in the Octave of Easter).

From celebration to life, therefore, aware that the Mass finds fulfilment in the concrete choices of those who are involved in the first person in the mysteries of Christ. We must not forget that we celebrate the Eucharist to learn how to *become Eucharistic men and women*. What does this mean? It means letting Christ act in our deeds: may His thoughts be our thoughts, His sentiments ours, His choices our choices. And this is holiness: to do as Christ did is Christian holiness. Saint Paul expresses this with precision, speaking of his own assimilation to Jesus, and he says it thus: “I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, Who loved me and gave Himself for me” (*Gal 2: 19-20*). This is Christian witness. Paul’s experience enlightens us too: to the extent that we subdue our selfishness, that is, that we allow to die that which is opposed to the Gospel and to Jesus’ love, a greater space is created within us for the power of His Spirit. Christians are men and women who allow their soul to be enlarged by the strength of the Holy Spirit, after having received the Body and Blood of Christ. Let your souls be enlarged! Not these narrow and closed, small, selfish souls, no! Broad souls, great souls, with grand horizons... Let your soul be enlarged with the strength of the Spirit, after having received the Body and the Blood of Christ.

Since the real presence of Christ in the consecrated Bread does not end with the Mass (cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1374), the Eucharist is kept in the tabernacle for the Communion to the sick and for the silent adoration of the Lord in the Blessed Sacrament; indeed, Eucharistic worship outside of Mass, whether in private or communal form, helps us to remain in Christ (cf. *ibid.*, 1378-1380).

The fruits of the Mass, therefore, are destined to ripen in everyday life. We can say it thus, forcing the image a little: the Mass is like the grain, the grain of wheat that then grows in ordinary life, grows and ripens in good deeds, in attitudes that make us resemble Jesus. The fruits of the Mass, therefore, are destined to ripen in everyday life. In truth, by increasing our union with Christ, the Eucharist renews the grace that the Spirit has given us in Baptism and Confirmation, so that our Christian witness may be credible (cf. *ibid.*, 1391-1392).

Again, by enkindling divine charity in our hearts, what does the Eucharist do? It separates us from sin: “The more we share the life of Christ and progress in His friendship, the more difficult it is to break away from Him by mortal sin” (*ibid.*, 1395).

The regular approach to the Eucharistic Conviction renews, strengthens and deepens the bond with the Christian community to which we belong, according to the principle that the Eucharist makes the Church (cf. *ibid.*, 1396), it unites us all.

Finally, participating in the Eucharist *commits us to others, especially the poor*, teaching us to pass from the flesh of Christ to the flesh of our brothers, in which He expects to be recognized, served, honoured and loved by us (cf. *ibid.*, 1397).

By placing the treasure of union with Christ into clay vessels (cf. 2 *Cor* 4: 7), we have a continual need to return to the holy altar, until when, in paradise, we will fully enjoy the blessedness of the wedding supper of the Lamb (cf. Rev. 19.9).

Let us thank the Lord for the journey of rediscovering the Holy Mass that He has given us to accomplish together, and let us be attracted with renewed faith to this real encounter with Jesus, Who died and rose for us, our contemporary. And may our life always be “in bloom” in this way, like Easter, with the flowers of hope, of faith, of good deeds. May we always find the strength for this in the Eucharist, in the union with Jesus. Happy Easter to you all!

Greetings in various languages

French

I am pleased to welcome pilgrims from: France, Belgium, Switzerland and other Francophone countries. I greet the young people present this morning, especially the students and teachers of the *Collège Sainte Catherine* in Geraardsbergen, Belgium. May the Risen Christ always be your joy and give you His strength to proclaim Him your neighbour. God bless you!

English

I greet the English-speaking pilgrims and visitors taking part in today's audience, particularly those from England, Ireland, Croatia, Sweden, Australia, the Philippines, Singapore and the United States of America. I offer a warm welcome to the newly-ordained deacons from the Pontifical Irish College, together with their families and friends. In the joy of the Risen Christ, I invoke upon you and your families the loving mercy of God our Father. May the Lord bless you all!

German

A warm welcome to German-speaking pilgrims! In particular I greet the altar servers of the *Sankt Laurentius* Parish of Tittmoning and the *Pueri Cantores* Choir of Eltville. I ask you: always remain united with Jesus, Who gives Himself to you in the sacrament of the Eucharist. He is your greatest friend. God bless you all.

Spanish

I cordially greet Spanish-speaking pilgrims from Spain and Latin America. In this Easter week, in which Christ's victory over sin and death resounds with all its strength and beauty, I invite you to nourish yourself constantly with the Eucharist, allowing yourself to be renewed with the real encounter with Jesus, until we fully enjoy the banquet that is being prepared us for all eternity. God bless you. Thank you very much.

Portuguese

I address a special greeting to all Portuguese-speaking pilgrims, in particular the faithful of Portugal and Brazil. Dear friends, faith in the Resurrection drives us to look towards the future, strengthened by hope in Christ's

victory over sin and death. Happy Easter to you all!

Arabic

I extend a cordial greeting to Arabic-speaking people, especially those from the Holy Land and the Middle East. The Church does not make the Eucharist, but it is the Eucharist that makes the Church, therefore the participation of every Christian in the Divine Celebration is an essential necessity, so as to obtain from the source of divine love the possibility of being able to quench one's thirst, and that of those nearby. May the Lord bless you all and protect you from the evil one!

Polish

I welcome Polish pilgrims. Dear brothers and sisters, the Octave of Easter is the time when we render glory to Christ, Who with His resurrection has opened the doors of eternity. Faith in the Resurrection is a source of Christian hope for you, of fraternal love, of true joy and peace! May the Lord bless you.

Croatian

I greet with joy Croatian pilgrims, especially the teachers from the "Sveti Duh" University Hospital in Zagreb, and young people from Dubrovnik, Slavonski Brod, Podstrana and Zagreb. Dear friends, Christ has overcome sin and death by His resurrection. May His living presence on the paths of your life always be your great joy and consolation. Jesus and Mary be praised!

Italian

I extend a cordial welcome to Italian-speaking faithful.

I am pleased to welcome the Deacons of the International College of Jesus in Rome and the young people of the Profession of Faith from the dioceses of Milan and Cremona. I encourage every one of you to live faith faithfully, bearing witness to it every day with gestures of charity.

I greet the Group of the *San Donnino d'Oro* Prize of Faenza and the parishes, especially those of the Most Holy Mary Immaculate of Pontecagnano-Faiano, Mary Help of Christians in Portichetto-Luisago, and the Holy Trinity of Naples. I hope that this meeting will be an opportunity for everyone to renew their following of the Risen Jesus and His teachings of life.

I address a special thought to the young, the elderly, the sick and newlyweds. Christ has conquered death and helps us to accept suffering as a privileged opportunity for redemption and salvation. Try to live the Easter message, bearing witness to peace and joy, gifts of the Risen Lord, in the places of life.
