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General Audience

Catechesis of the Holy Father

Greetings in various languages

This morning's General Audience took place at 9.20 a.m. in Saint 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 continued his cycle of catechesis on the Commandments, focusing on the theme "*The day of rest*" (cf. *Ex* 20: 8-11).

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!

Our journey through the Decalogue leads us today to the Commandment on the day of rest. It seems like an easy commandment to obey, but this is a mistaken impression. Truly resting is not simple, because there is false repose and true repose. How can we recognize them?

Today's society thirsts for enjoyment and vacations. The industry of distraction flourishes and advertising

presents the ideal world as a great theme park where all people enjoy themselves. The dominant concept of *life* today has its centre of gravity not in activity and in commitment, but in evasion. Earning for fun and satisfaction. The model image is that of a successful person who can afford extensive and various spaces for pleasure. But this mentality leads us to slide towards dissatisfaction and an existence anaesthetized by enjoyment that is not rest, but rather alienation and fleeing from reality. Man has never relaxed as much as today, yet man has never experienced such emptiness as he does nowadays. The possibility of having fun, of going out, cruises, trips, many things that do not give you fullness of heart. Rather: they do not give you rest.

The words of the Decalogue seek out and find the heart of the problem, shedding a different light on what rest may be. The Commandment has a peculiar element: it provides a reason. Rest in the name of the Lord has a precise motive: "For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but He rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy" (Ex 20: 11).

This recalls the end of creation, when God says: "God saw all that He had made, and it was very good" (Gen 1: 31). And so there begins the day of rest, which is God's joy for what He has created. It is the day of contemplation and blessing.

What, then, is rest according to this Commandment? It is the moment of contemplation, it is the moment of praise, not escape. It is the time for looking at reality and saying: how beautiful life is! In contrast to rest as flight from reality, the Decalogue places rest as the *blessing of reality*. For us Christians, the centre of the day of the Lord, Sunday, is the Eucharist, which means "*thanksgiving*". It is the day for saying to God: thank You Lord for life, for Your mercy, for all Your gifts. Sunday is not the day for cancelling out the other days but for remembering them, blessing them and making peace with life. How many people have many opportunities to enjoy themselves, and yet do not live in peace with life! Sunday is the day for making peace with life, saying: life is precious; it is not easy, at times it is painful, but it is precious.

Being introduced to authentic repose is a work of God in us, but requires us to distance ourselves from malediction and its appeal (cf. Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, 83). Indeed, bending the heart towards unhappiness, underlining reasons for discontent, is very easy. Blessing and joy imply openness to good that is a mature movement of the heart. Good is loving and never imposes itself. It must be chosen.

Peace is chosen, it cannot be imposed and it is not found by chance. Moving away from the bitter folds of his heart, man needs to make peace with what he flees from. It is necessary to reconcile oneself with one's own history, with the facts that one does not accept, with the difficult parts of one's own existence. I ask you: are you all reconciled with your own history? A question to reflect on: am I reconciled with my history? Indeed, true peace does not mean changing one's history, but accepting it, making the most of it, just as it is.

How often we meet Christians who in sickness have consoled themselves with a serenity that is not found in pleasure-seekers and hedonists! And we have seen humble and poor people rejoice in small graces with a happiness that tasted of eternity.

The Lord says in Deuteronomy: "This day I call the heavens and the earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live" (30: 19). This choice is the "*fiat*" of the Virgin Mary, it is an openness to the Holy Spirit that lets us follow in the footsteps of Christ, the One who gives Himself to the Father in the most dramatic moment and thus takes the path that leads to the Resurrection.

When does life become beautiful? When you start to think well of it, whatever your story may be. When the gift of a doubt makes its way: that which is all grace^[1], and that holy thought breaks down the inner wall of dissatisfaction, inaugurating authentic rest. Life becomes beautiful when the heart is opened to Providence and discovers that what the Psalm says is true, "My soul finds rest in God alone" (62: 2). It is beautiful, this phrase from the Psalm: "My soul finds rest in God alone".

[1] As Saint Teresa of the Child Jesus reminds us, in G. Bernanos, *Diario di un curato di campagna*, Milan 1965, 270.

Greetings in various languages

French

I cordially greet Francophone pilgrims, in particular the Guinean National Pilgrimage, accompanied by Cardinal Sarah and Archbishop Coulibaly of Conakry, and the national pilgrimage of Senegal, accompanied by Mgr. Mamba, bishop of Ziguinchor. Following the example of Mary who, with her *fiat*, opened herself to the Holy Spirit and welcomed Life, let us take the time to give thanks to the Lord for the life she gives us and to learn to find our joy. God bless you!

English

I greet the English-speaking pilgrims and visitors taking part in today's audience, especially those from England, Denmark, Hungary, Malta, New Zealand, India, the Philippines, Vietnam and the United States of America. I also greet the priests of the Institute for Continuing Theological Education of the Pontifical North American College. Upon all of you, and your families, I invoke the joy and peace of our Lord Jesus Christ. God bless you!

German

I am pleased to greet German-speaking pilgrims, especially the various groups of students and young people. Let us take the opportunity on Sunday to thank God for His gifts and for our life. My soul finds rest in God alone (see *Psalms* 62: 2). May the Holy Spirit fill you with His joy and peace.

Spanish

I cordially greet Spanish-speaking pilgrims, particularly the groups from Spain and Latin America.

I encourage you to open your heart to Divine Providence and to discover the profound truth of the Psalm: "My soul finds rest in God alone"; and, together with the Virgin Mary, may we welcome the Holy Spirit to follow in Christ's footsteps on the path of life.

Portuguese

I extend a cordial greeting to all the Portuguese-speaking pilgrims, in particular to the faithful of Porto and Brazil. You are called to be witnesses of the Gospel in the world, transfigured by the joy and merciful grace that Jesus gives us every Sunday in the Eucharist. May God's blessing descend upon you and your families.

Arabic

I extend a cordial welcome to Arabic-speaking pilgrims, especially those from the Middle East. Dear brothers and sisters, always remember that the day of rest for us Christians is a day of blessing and thanksgiving. It is the day to say to God: thank you for life, for your mercy and for all your gifts. May the Lord bless you!

Polish

I offer my cordial welcome to the Polish people taking part in this audience. I address a special greeting to the

children and young people who have started their new school year, and also to their parents and educators. This is a time to acquire knowledge, wisdom and life experience. Do not forget to pray every day and to attend Mass every Sunday. May Our Lady, whose birth we remember on next Saturday's feast day, help you to strive for holiness. Praised be Jesus Christ.

Italian

I extend a cordial welcome to Italian-speaking pilgrims.

In particular I greet the Fatebenefratelli; the Missionary Sisters Servants of the Holy Spirit and the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians.

I greet the young people preparing for the Confirmation from the diocese of Verona; parish groups, in particular those of Montecosaro Scalo, Sannicandro and Caserta; representatives of the Spoleto District House; the delegation of the Italian Cities of Wine; the Italian Union of the blind and visually impaired from Caserta, and the *Lingua Ecclesiae* Group from Rome.

I address a particular thought to the young, the elderly, the sick and newlyweds. Next Saturday is the feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The recurrence coincides with the end of the summer and the harvest, and reminds us that God is faithful to His promises. In Mary Most Holy He prepared a living temple in whom His Son, made flesh, wished to live among us and obtain our salvation.

God bless you!
