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The Pope's words at the Angelus prayer

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 Saint Peter's Square.

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

Before the Angelus

Dear brothers and sisters, good day!

This Sunday's Gospel reading (see *Mt* 13:44-52) consists of the final verses of the chapter Matthew devotes to the parable of the Kingdom of Heaven. The passage includes three parables that are very briefly outlined: that of the hidden treasure, that of the precious pearl, and that of the net cast into the sea.

I will look at the first two in which the Kingdom of Heaven is compared to two different "precious" items, namely, the hidden treasure in the field and the pearl of great value. The reaction of he who finds the pearl or the treasure is practically the same: the man and the merchant sell everything to buy what is now most dear to them. With these two similes, Jesus proposes to involve us in the building of the Kingdom of Heaven, presenting an essential characteristic of Christian life, of the life of the Kingdom of heaven: those who fully pledge themselves to the Kingdom are those who are willing to stake everything, who are courageous. Indeed, both the man and the merchant in these two parables sell everything they have, thus renouncing their material security. From this it can be understood that the building of the Kingdom requires not only the grace of God, but also the active willingness of humanity. Everything is done by grace, everything! We need only have the willingness to receive it, not to resist grace: grace does everything but it takes "my" responsibility, "my" willingness ... and who is responsible for this?

The gestures of the man and the merchant who seek to buy more precious treasures, depriving themselves of their goods, are decisive gestures, and radical gestures; but I would say that they are "one way" gestures, not a

“round trip”: they are “one way” gestures. Moreover, they are gestures made with joy because both of them have found treasure. We are called upon to assume the attitude of these two Gospel figures, so that we too may become healthily restless seekers of the Kingdom of Heaven. It is a matter of abandoning the heavy burden of our worldly sureties that prevent us from searching and building up the Kingdom: the covetousness for possession, the thirst for profit and power, and thinking only of ourselves.

In our times, as we are all aware, some people’s lives can end up mediocre and dull because they probably do not go in search of real treasure: they are content with attractive but fleeting things, whose bright lights prove illusory as they give way to darkness. Instead the light of the Kingdom is not like fireworks, it is light: fireworks last only an instant, whereas the light of the Kingdom accompanies all our life.

The Kingdom of Heaven is the opposite of the superfluous things that the world offers, the opposite of a dull life: it is a treasure that renews life every day and leads it to extend towards wider horizons. Indeed, those who have found this treasure have a creative and inquisitive heart, which does not repeat but rather invents, tracing and setting out on new paths which lead us to love God, to love others, and to truly love ourselves. The sign of those who walk this path of the Kingdom is creativity, always trying to do more. And creativity is what takes life and gives life, and gives, and gives, and gives... It always looks for many other ways to give life.

Jesus, Who is the hidden treasure and the pearl of great value, cannot but inspire joy, all the joy of the world: the joy of discovering a meaning in life, the joy of committing oneself to the adventure of holiness.

May the Blessed Virgin help us to search every day for the treasure of the Kingdom of Heaven, so that the love God has given us through Jesus may be manifested in our words and gestures.

After the Angelus

Dear brothers and sisters,

On the memorial of the Saints Joachim and Anne, Jesus “grandparents”, I would like to invite the young to perform a gesture of tenderness towards the elderly, especially the loneliest, in their homes and residences, those who have not seen their loved ones for many months. Dear young people, each one of these elderly people is your grandparent! Do not leave them by themselves. Use the inventiveness of love, make telephone calls, video calls, send messages, listen to them and, where possible, in compliance with the healthcare rules, go to visit them too. Send them a hug. They are your roots. An uprooted tree cannot grow, it does not blossom or bear fruit. This is why the bond and connection with your roots is important. “The blossom of a tree comes from what it has underground”, says a poet from my homeland. Therefore I invite you to give a big round of applause for our grandparents, everyone!

I understand that a new ceasefire concerning the Donbass area was recently decided in Minsk by members of the Trilateral Contact Group. While I thank them for this sign of goodwill aimed at bringing much-desired peace to that tormented region, I pray that what has been agreed will finally be put into practice, also through effective disarmament and mine clearance. This is the only way to rebuild confidence and lay the foundations for the reconciliation that is so necessary and so much awaited by the people.

I greet you all from my heart, Romans and pilgrims from various countries. I greet in particular the faithful of Franca, Brazil, the young people of the archdiocese of Modena-Nonantola, and those of the parish of *Santi Fabiano e Venanzio* of Rome.

I wish you all a blessed Sunday. Please, do not forget to pray for me. Have a good lunch, and *arrivederci!*
