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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.

After the Angelus, the Holy Father participated in the festive meal offered to around 1,250 people in need in the Paul VI Hall, on the occasion of the Seventh World Day of the Poor. As he was seated at the table, the Pope addressed some words of blessing and greeting to those present.

The following are the Pope's words of introduction to the Marian prayer:

Before the Angelus

Dear brothers and sisters, *buongiorno!*

Today's Gospel presents us the parable of the talents (cf. *Mt 25:14-30*). A master departs on a journey and entrusts his talents, or rather his possessions, his "capital", to his servants: talents were a monetary unit. He distributes them according to the abilities of each one. On his return, he asks for an account of what they have done. Two of them have doubled what they received, and the lord praises them, while the third, out of fear, buried his talent and can only return it, the reason for which he receives a severe rebuke. Looking at this parable, we can learn *two different ways* of approaching God.

The first way is that of the one who buries the talent he has received, who cannot see the riches God has given him: he trusts neither his master nor himself. In fact, he says to his master: "Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not winnow" (v. 24). He is afraid of him. He does not see the esteem, he does not see the trust that the lord places in him, but sees only the actions of a

master who demands more than he gives, of a judge. This is his image of God: he cannot believe in His goodness; he cannot believe in the Lord's goodness towards him. That is why he gets stuck and does not allow himself to be involved in the mission he has received.

We then see this second way, in the other two protagonists, who repay their lord's trust by in turn trusting in him.

These two invest everything they have received, even though they do not know at the outset if everything will go well: they study, they see the possibilities, and prudently seek out the best; they accept the risk and put themselves on the line. They trust, they study and they risk. Thus, they have the courage to act freely, creatively, generating new wealth (cf. vv. 20-23).

Brothers and sisters, this is the crossroads we face with God: fear or trust. Either you are afraid before God, or you trust in the Lord. And we, like the protagonists of the parable – all of us – have received talents, all of us, far more precious than money. But much of how we invest them depends on our trust in the Lord, which frees our hearts, makes us active and creative in goodness. Do not forget this: trust frees, always; fear paralyses. Remember: fear paralyses, trust liberates. This also applies to the education of children. And let us ask ourselves: do I believe that God is the Father and entrusts gifts to me because He trusts me? And do I trust in Him to the point of putting myself on the line, even when the results are neither certain nor to be taken for granted? Am I able to say every day in prayer, "Lord, I trust in You, give me the strength to keep going; I trust in You, in the things You have given me: let me know how to carry them forward".

Finally, also as Church: do we cultivate a climate of trust, of mutual esteem in our environments, that helps us to move forward together, that unlocks people and stimulates the creativity of love in everyone? Let us think about it.

And may the Virgin Mary help us to overcome fear – never be afraid of God! Awe, yes; fear, no – and to trust the Lord.

After the Angelus

Dear brothers and sisters!

Manuel Gonzales-Serna, diocesan priest, and nineteen companions, priests and laypeople, killed in 1936 in the climate of religious persecution of the Spanish Civil War, were beatified yesterday in Seville. These martyrs bore witness to Christ up to the end. May their example comfort the many Christians who are discriminated against because of their faith in our times. A round of applause for the new Blessed!

I reiterate my closeness to the dear people of Myanmar, who unfortunately continue to suffer from violence and abuse. I pray that they are not discouraged and trust always in the help of the Lord.

And, brothers and sisters, let us continue to pray for tormented Ukraine – I can see the flags here – and for the populations of Palestine and Israel. Peace is possible. It takes good will. Peace is possible. Let us not resign ourselves to war! And let us not forget that war is always, always, always a defeat. The only ones to gain are arms manufacturers.

Today we celebrate the Seventh World Day of the Poor, whose theme this year is: "Do not turn your face away from anyone who is poor" (*Tob 4:7*). I thank those in the dioceses and parishes who have organized solidarity initiatives with people and families who struggle to make ends meet.

And today we also remember all the victims of road accidents: let us pray for them, for their relatives, and let us

make efforts to prevent accidents.

I would also like to mention World Fisheries Day, which will be held the day after tomorrow.

I affectionately greet you all, pilgrims from Italy and other parts of the world. I greet the faithful of Madrid, Ibiza and Warsaw, and the members of the Council of the World Union of Catholic Teachers. I greet the groups from Aprilia, San Ferdinando di Puglia and Sant'Antimo; the FIDAS Association of Orta Nova, and the participants in the "Day of Sharing" of the Apostolic Movement of the Blind. A special greeting goes to the Ecuadorian community in Rome, which is celebrating the *Virgen del Quinche*. And a greeting to the young people of the *Immacolata*.

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