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Francis greets Vatican employees: engage in dignified work, respecting the person and the family

“We meet once again for this beautiful moment as a family, to exchange Christmas greetings. It is a very pleasant moment for me, because it is an opportunity to meet you all together, also with your relatives, wives and husbands, children, and parents, who are often grandparents”, said the Pope this morning as he received Vatican employees in the Paul VI Hall. Francis first thanked the Lord for all His gifts, “because it is true that in these days we think about Christmas presents, but in reality the one who gives the true gift is Him, our Father, He who gives us Jesus. And our gifts, that beautiful tradition of exchanging gifts, should express this: a reflection of the sole gift that is His Son, made man and born of the Virgin Mary”.

He then went on to give thanks to God for the gift of work. “Work is extremely important, both for the person who works, and for his or her family”, he emphasized. “And while we give thanks, let us pray for the people and families, in Italy and throughout the world, who do not have work, or very often do unworthy jobs, badly paid and damaging to health. ... We must always thank God for work. And we must make efforts, each person with his or her own responsibility, to ensure that work is dignified, respects the person and the family, and is just. And here in the Vatican we have an additional reason to do so: we have the Gospel, and we must follow the directives of the social doctrine of the Church. Here in the Vatican I do not want jobs that are not in line with this. No illegal work, no subterfuges”.

But as well as thanking the Lord, Francis also thanked those present for their work. “I thank each and every one of you for the effort you make every day in doing your work and endeavouring to do it well, even perhaps when you are not feeling well, or have family worries. The beauty of the Vatican is that, as it is very small, it is possible to perceive it in its entirety, with the different tasks that form the whole, and each one is important. The various sectors of work are close to each other and connected, and everyone knows each other, more or less, and one feels the satisfaction of seeing a certain order, that things work, with all the limits, naturally – one can always improve and must do so – but is good to see that each sector does its bit and the whole functions well for the benefit of all. Here, this is all easier, because we are small in size, but this detracts nothing from your commitment and personal merit; and for this reason, I wish to thank you”.

Francis went on to recall that this has been a special year, the Holy Year of Mercy, and that the Vatican employees also had their own Jubilee and passed through the Holy Door with the Pope. “The Lord this year has made His mercy overflow upon us. And did all this grace finish with the end of the Jubilee? No! This grace is

within us, because we make it flourish in everyday life, both in the family and at work, and everywhere. Christmas reminds us that 'the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in the present age', as St. Paul says. The 'grace of God' appeared in Jesus, He is the Love of God incarnate, by the work of the Holy Spirit. And we have all received this same Spirit, in Baptism and in Confirmation, but we must invoke Him every day, reawakening the action of the Spirit in us, to live in this world – even in this small world of the Vatican – in a 'self-controlled, upright and godly' way".

The Holy Father concluded by asking the workers to convey his special greetings to the children and the elderly in their families. "They are so important!" he exclaimed. "And a greeting accompanied by prayer for the sick. To all of you, I hope that your hearts are full of mercy, full of the grace of the Jubilee that Jesus comes to rekindle in us. May the Lord bless you and Our Lady protect you. And, before the Nativity scene, remember to pray for me".
