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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 the Paul VI Hall, 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 "Respecting the name of the Lord" (Bible passages: Book of Exodus 20: 7; Gospel according to John 17: 25-26).

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!

We continue our catechesis on the commandments, and today we will look at the commandment, "You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain" (*Ex 20: 7*). We rightly read this word as an invitation not to offend the name of God and to avoid using it inappropriately. This clear meaning prepares us to look more deeply at these precious words, about not using the name of God in vain, inappropriately.

Let us listen to them better. “You shall not take” translates literally, in Hebrew as in Greek, “*you will not take upon yourself*”, “*you will not assume*”.

The expression “*in vain*” is clearer and means: “in an empty way, vainly”. It refers to an empty vessel, a form without content. It is the characteristic of hypocrisy, formalism and of the lie of using the words or using the name of God but in an empty way, without truth.

The *name* in the Bible is intimate truth of things and, above all, people. The name often represents mission. For example, Abraham in Genesis (cf. 17: 5), and Simon Peter in the Gospels (cf. *Jn* 1: 42), receive a new name to indicate the change in direction of their life. It is truly knowing the name of God that leads us to transformation in our own life: from the moment in which Moses knows the name of God, his history changes (cf. *Ex* 3: 13-15).

The name of God, in Hebrew rites, is proclaimed solemnly on the Great Day of Forgiveness, and the people are forgiven because by means of this name one comes into contact with the very life of God Who is mercy.

So, “taking upon oneself the name of God” means assuming ourselves His reality, entering into a strong relationship, in a close relationship with Him. For us Christians, this commandment is the call to remember that we are baptized “in the *name* of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit”, as we affirm every day when we make the sign of the cross, to live our daily actions in real and heartfelt communion with God, that is, in His love. And regarding this, making the sign of the cross, I would like to repeat once again: teach children to make the sign of the cross. Have you seen how children do this? If you say to children, “Make the sign of the cross”, they do something without knowing what it is. They do not know how to make the sign of the cross! Teach them to do so in the name of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. The first act of faith of a child. A task for you, homework to do: teach your children to make the sign of the cross.

We might wonder: is it possible to take upon yourself the name of God in a hypocritical way, like a formality, empty? The answer is unfortunately affirmative: yes, it is possible. One can live a false relationship with God. Jesus said this to the doctors of the law: they did things, but they did not do what God wanted. They spoke about God, but they did not do God’s will. And the advice that Jesus gives is: “Do what they say but not what they do”. One can live a false relationship with God, like those people. And this Word of the Decalogue is indeed the invitation to a relationship with God that is not false, without hypocrisies; a relationship in which we entrust ourselves to Him with all that we are. In the end, until the day in which we risk our existence with the Lord, touching with our own hands that in Him we find life, then we merely theorize.

This is the Christianity that touches hearts. Why are the saints so able to touch hearts? Because the saints do not merely speak, they move! It moves our heart when a holy person speaks to us, says things to us. And they are able, because in saints we see what our heart deeply desires: authenticity, true relationships, radicality. And this is seen in those “saints next door”, who are for instance the many parents who give their children the example of a consistent, simple, honest and generous life.

If those Christians who take on themselves the name of God without falsity – thus putting into practice the first demand of the Lord’s Prayer, “hallowed be Thy name” – the proclamation of the Church will be heard and it will be more credible. If our real life makes manifest the name of God we see how beautiful baptism is, and how great is the gift of the Eucharist! What a sublime union there is between our body and the Body of Christ: Christ in us and we in Him! United! This is not hypocrisy, this is truth. This is not speaking and praying like a parrot, this is praying with the heart, loving the Lord.

Ever since Christ’s cross, no-one can disdain himself and think badly of his own existence. No-one, never! Whatever he has done. *Because the name of each one of us rests on Christ’s shoulders*. He carries us! It is worth taking upon ourselves the name of God because He took on our name unto the end, even the evil that is within us: He took on the burden to forgive us, to put His love in our heart. This is why God proclaims in this commandment, “Take me onto you, because I have taken you onto me”.

Anyone can invoke the name of the Lord, Who is faithful and merciful love, in whatever situation he or she may

be in. God will never say “no” to a heart that invokes Him sincerely. And let us return to our homework: teaching children to make the sign of the cross well.

Greetings in various languages

French

I cordially greet Francophone pilgrims from France and other countries. As the Saints have done, let our life manifest the name of God in truth, without hypocrisy; in this way the proclamation of the Church will be more credible. God bless you.

English

I greet the English-speaking pilgrims and visitors taking part in today’s audience. Upon all of you, and your families, I invoke the joy and peace of our Lord Jesus Christ. God bless you!

German

A cordial welcome to German-speaking brothers and sisters, in particular the pilgrims of the diocese of Graz-Seckau, with their bishop, Msgr. Wilhelm. As Christians we bear the name of Christ, which means that we are witnesses of the living God and His merciful love with our whole life. For this testimony the Lord blesses you and your families.

Spanish

I cordially greet Spanish-speaking pilgrims from Spain and Latin America. On the feast of the Coronation of the Virgin Mary, let us ask our Mother in Heaven to help us to invoke the name of God at all times, knowing that God will never stop listening to those who come to Him with faith and hope. May the Lord bless you. Thank you very much.

Portuguese

I address a cordial greeting to Portuguese-speaking pilgrims, in particular to the young Lusitanians of Lijó and to the Brazilian sailors of the “Brasil” school ship. Dear friends, in baptism we have been sanctified in the name of the Most Holy Trinity. Let us ask for the grace to be able to live our baptismal duties as true imitators of Jesus, the Son of God, guided by the Holy Spirit, for the glory of the Father. Thank you.

Arabic

I cordially greet Arabic-speaking pilgrims, especially those from the Holy Land, Jordan and the Middle East. This commandment refers to the importance of sanctifying the name of God and not using it in vain. It is a commandment that teaches us to pronounce the name of God only to glorify and adore it, and never to use or exploit it; calls us to show, through our actions and words, the greatness and the profundity of the holy name with which we have been called. May the Lord bless you and protect you from the evil one!

Polish

I offer my cordial welcome to the Polish people participating in this audience. In particular, I greet all the pilgrims who come to Jasna Góra in these days, in order to participate in the Solemnity of Our Lady of Częstochowa. May the Queen of Poland guide and strengthen your faith so that you may courageously proclaim the name of

God to the world and bear witness to it with your life. I warmly bless your stay in Rome, the hardship of your pilgrimage, and the time of summer rest. I entrust myself to your prayers for my next Apostolic trip to Dublin. Praised be Jesus Christ.

Italian

In greeting Italian-speaking pilgrims, my thoughts go to the tragedy that occurred in recent days in Calabria near the Raganello gorge, where hikers from various regions of Italy lost their lives. While I entrust the deceased to God's merciful goodness, and express my spiritual closeness to their families, as well as to the wounded.

I am pleased to welcome the Dominican Missionary Sisters of Saint Sixtus, on the occasion of their General Chapter, and the Franciscan Missionary Sisters of the Divine Mother.

I greet the parish groups, the "16arte" Association of Foglianise and the "Armonia" Choir of Credera and Moscazzano.

I address a special thought to the young, the elderly, the sick and the newlyweds. Today is the liturgical memorial of the Blessed Virgin Mary Queen. May the Mother of God be your refuge in the most difficult moments, and teach you to love her Son with the same tenderness and exclusiveness with which you loved her. Pray also for me, so that my upcoming trip to Dublin, on 25 and 26 August, on the occasion of the World Meeting of Families, may be a moment of grace and listening to the voice of Christian families all over the world. God bless you all!
