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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 "In Christ our spousal vocation finds fullness" (cf. Bible reading: from the Letter of Saint Paul the Apostle to the Ephesians, 5: 25, 28, 31-32).

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!

Today I would like to complete the catechesis on the Sixth Word of the Decalogue – "Do not commit adultery" – highlighting that Christ's faithful love is the light for living the beauty of human emotions. Indeed, our emotional dimension is a *call to love*, which is made manifest in beauty, acceptance and mercy. This is very important. How does love manifest itself? In faithfulness, in acceptance and in mercy.

However, it should not be forgotten that this commandment refers explicitly to matrimonial fidelity, and it is therefore good to reflect more deeply on its *spousal* meaning. This passage from the Scripture, this passage from the Letter of Saint Paul, is revolutionary! To think, with the anthropology of that time, it says that a husband must love his wife like Christ loves the Church: but it is a revolution! Perhaps, in that time, it was the most revolutionary thing that had been said on marriage. Always on the path of love. We can ask ourselves: this commandment to fidelity, to whom is it addressed? Only to spouses? In reality, this commandment is for all, it is a paternal Word of God addressed to every man and woman.

Let us remember that the path of human maturation is indeed the journey of love itself, which goes from *receiving care* to the capacity for *offering care*, from *receiving life* to the capacity for *giving life*. Becoming adult men and women means arriving at living the spousal and parental attitude, which is made manifest in various situations of life such as the ability to take on the burden of another person and loving them without ambiguity. It is therefore a global attitude of the person who knows how to take on a situation and how to enter into a deep relationship with others.

So, who is the adulterer, the lustful, the unfaithful? An immature person, who keeps his own life for himself and interprets situations on the basis of his own wellbeing and his own satisfaction. Therefore, to marry, it is not enough to celebrate the wedding! It is necessary to travel the path from I to we, from thinking alone to thinking as a couple, from living alone to living as a couple: it is a beautiful path, a beautiful path. When we arrive at the point of decentring ourselves, then every act is *spousal*: we work, we speak, we decide, we meet others with a welcoming and oblation attitude.

Every Christian vocation, in this sense – we can extend the perspective a little, and say that every Christian vocation in this sense, is *spousal*. *Priesthood* is, because it is the call, in Christ and in the Church, to serve the community with all the affection, real care and wisdom that the Lord gives. The Church does not need aspirants to the *role* of priests – no, they are not needed, it is better for them to stay at home – but instead she needs men whose heart the Holy Spirit touches with a love without reserve for the Spouse of Christ. In the priesthood, one who loves the people of God will all the paternity, tenderness and strength of a spouse or a father. In this way, also *consecrated virginity* in Christ is lived with faithfulness and with joy as a spousal and fruitful relationship of motherhood and fatherhood.

I repeat: every Christian vocation is spousal, because it is the fruit of the bond of love in which we are all regenerated, the bond of love with Christ, as we are reminded by the passage from Paul, read at the beginning. Starting from *His* fidelity, *His* tenderness, *His* generosity, we look with faith to matrimony and every vocation, and we understand the full meaning of sexuality.

The human creature, in its indivisible unity of spirit and body, and in its male-female polarity, is very good and is destined to love and to be loved. The human body is not an instrument of pleasure, but the locus of our call to love, and in authentic love there is no space for lust and for its superficiality. Men and women deserve more than this!

Therefore, the commandment *Do not commit adultery*, although negative in form, guides us to our original calling, that is, to the full and faithful spousal love that Jesus Christ revealed and gave to us (cf. *Rom 12: 1*).

Greetings in various languages

French

I cordially greet French-speaking pilgrims from France and Switzerland, in particular those from the diocese of Evry, with their bishop Michel Pansard, and the *de l'Arche* Community of Montpellier and the young people of Metz, Le Mans and Lille. Dear friends, on the eve of the Feast of All Saints, I invite you to increase your desire to

walk the paths of holiness, for the greater glory of God. God bless you!

English

I greet the English-speaking pilgrims and visitors taking part in today's audience, especially those from England, Ireland, Denmark, Sweden, Indonesia, Korea, the Philippines, Vietnam and the United States of America. I thank the choirs for their praise of God in song. Upon all of you, and your families, I invoke the Lord's blessings of joy and peace. God bless you!

German

I greet with affection the German-speaking pilgrims, in particular the principals of the Association of Catholic Schools of the diocese of Augsburg. Let yourselves be guided by the love of Christ, which is the light to experience the beauty of human emotions in a mature and oblation attitude. May the Lord give you the grace to grow ever more in fidelity to the fullness of His love.

Spanish

I cordially greet Spanish-speaking pilgrims, in particular the groups from Spain and Latin America. I encourage you, following the example of the saints whose solemnity we celebrate tomorrow, to be able to live your vocation fully and faithfully, in harmony with the nuptial love that Jesus Christ revealed to us and gave to us as a gift. Many thanks.

Portuguese

Dear Portuguese-speaking pilgrims, especially the faithful of Leme and Rio de Janeiro, I hope this pilgrimage will strengthen your faith in Jesus Christ, Who calls every man and woman to give of themselves to others. Return home with the certainty that God's love, poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, will make us ever more generous. God bless each one of you!

Arabic

I cordially greet Arabic-speaking pilgrims, especially those from Egypt, Syria and the Middle East. The commandment "Do not commit adultery" invites us to fidelity to our covenants and to our love. Every true love produces a genuine commitment and respect for the covenant with those we love. So the betrayal of love indicates selfishness and a lack of maturity. Let us pray to the Lord to give us the gift of fidelity, both in marriage and in the priestly or monastic life. May the Lord bless you and protect you from the evil one!

Polish

I cordially greet Polish pilgrims. Tomorrow is the solemnity of all the saints, and the day after tomorrow, the memorial of all the departed faithful. By visiting the tombs of our loved ones we remember that we have a multitude of saints who before God intercede for our needs. Let us not forget, however, that so many deceased also await our spiritual support. Let us remember them in our prayers, together with Mary, "Queen of all Saints", asking that they be welcomed into the ranks of the elect in heaven. May the saints help us become witnesses of Christ and His Gospel before our brothers. Praised be Jesus Christ.

Italian

I extend a cordial welcome to Italian-speaking pilgrims.

I am pleased to welcome the Capitulars of the Religious of Mary Immaculate and the parish groups, especially

those of Rome, Foggia and Sarno.

I greet the participants in the pilgrimage promoted by the Secular Franciscan Order of Italy; the staff of the 132rd "Ariete" Land Artillery Regiment of Maniago; the groups of the National Sailors' Association of Italy; the delegation from the *Aleteia* network and the sports group for the blind of Vicenza.

I address a special thought to the young, the elderly, the sick and newlyweds.

Tomorrow we will celebrate the Solemnity of All Saints and, the day after tomorrow, the memorial of all the deceased faithful. The testimony of faith of those who preceded us, strengthens in us the certainty that God accompanies each person on the journey of life, He never abandons anyone to his own devices, and wants us all to be holy, as He is holy.
