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The Pope's words at the Angelus prayer

Before the Angelus

After the Angelus

At midday today, first Sunday of Lent, 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 morning!

The Gospel of this First Sunday of Lent (cf. *Lk* 4: 1-13) recounts Jesus' temptations in the desert. After fasting for forty days, Jesus is tempted three times by the devil. First he invites Him to turn a stone into bread (v. 3); then he shows Him from above all the kingdoms of the world and proposes to Him to become a powerful and glorious Messiah (vv. 5-6); finally, he leads Him to the highest pinnacle of the temple of Jerusalem and invites Him to throw Himself down, to manifest in a spectacular way His divine power (vv. 9-11). The three temptations indicate three ways the world always proposes, promising great successes, three ways to deceive us: *the greed to possess* – to have, have, have –, *human glory*, and *the exploitation of God*. They are three roads that will lead us to ruin.

The first, the road of the *greed to possess*: this is always the devil's insidious logic. He begins from the natural and legitimate need to eat, to live, to be fulfilled, to be happy, but then pushes us to believe that all this is possible without God, rather, even against Him. However, Jesus opposes him, saying: "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone'" (v. 4). Recalling the Chosen People's long journey through the desert, Jesus affirms His

will to abandon Himself with full trust to the providence of the Father, who always takes care of His children.

Second temptation: the way of *human glory*. The devil says: "If you then, will worship me, it shall all be yours" (v. 7). All personal dignity can be lost, if one lets oneself be corrupted by the idols of money, success, and power, to attain one's own self-affirmation. And one experiences the thrill of an empty joy that very soon vanishes. And this also leads us to be like "peacocks," to vanity, but this also vanishes. Therefore, Jesus answers: "You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only shall you serve" (v. 8).

And then the third temptation: *to exploit God* to one's advantage. To the devil who, quoting the Scriptures invites Him to obtain from God a striking miracle, Jesus opposes him again with the firm decision to remain humble, to remain confident before the Father: "It is said, 'You shall not tempt the Lord your God'" (v. 12). And thus He rejects what is, perhaps, the most subtle temptation: that of wanting to "pull God on our side," by asking Him for graces that in reality serve or will serve to satisfy our pride.

These are the ways placed before us, with the illusion that in this way we will be able to obtain success and happiness. However, in reality, they are altogether foreign to God's way of acting. Indeed, rather they separate us from God, because they are the works of Satan. Jesus, facing these tests personally, overcomes temptation thrice to adhere fully to the Father's plan. And He points out to us the remedies: the interior life, faith in God, the certainty of His love, the certainty that God loves us, who is Father, and with this certainty, we will overcome every temptation.

However, there is something to which I want to call your attention, an interesting thing. In answering the tempter, Jesus *does not enter into dialogue* but responds to the three challenges only with the Word of God. This teaches us that one doesn't dialogue with the devil, one must not dialogue; one answers only with the Word of God.

So, let us make the most of Lent, as a privileged time to be purified, to experience God's consoling presence in our life.

May the Virgin Mary, icon of fidelity to God, support us with her maternal intercession on our journey, helping us always to reject evil and receive the good.
