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General Audience

This morning's general audience took place at 9.30 in the Library of the Vatican Apostolic Palace.

In his address in Italian the Pope continued his cycle of catechesis on the Beatitudes, focusing this time on the seventh: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God" (*Mt 5: 9*).

After summarising his catechesis in various languages, the Holy Father addressed special greetings to the faithful.

The general audience concluded with the recitation of the *Pater Noster* and the Apostolic Blessing.

Catechesis of the Holy Father

Dear brothers and sisters, good morning!

Today's catechesis is dedicated to the seventh beatitude, of the "peacemakers" who are proclaimed children of God. I am happy that this one falls right after Easter because the peace of Christ is a fruit of His death and resurrection, as we heard from the Letter of Saint Paul. To understand this beatitude the meaning of the word "*peace*" needs to be explained, because it can be misunderstood or at times become meaningless.

We must orient ourselves between two ideas of peace: the first is the biblical one, where the beautiful word *shalòm* appears. It expresses abundance, luxuriousness, well-being. When one wishes *shalòm* on someone in Hebrew, the desire is that of a life that is beautiful, full, prosperous, but also one in accord with truth and justice which would have its fulfilment in the Messiah, the Prince of Peace (cfr *Is 9:6; Mic 5:4-5*).

Then there is another more widespread meaning in which the word "peace" is understood as a sort of interior tranquility: I am calm, I am at peace. This is a modern, psychological and more subjective idea. This peace is

commonly understood as quiet, harmony, internal equilibrium. This accepted meaning of the word “peace” is incomplete and cannot become an absolute because anxieties in life may be an important time to grow. Very often it is the Lord Himself who sows restlessness in us so that we might go towards Him, to find Him. In this sense it is an important moment of growth, whereas it may be that interior tranquility might correspond to a tamed conscience rather than to true spiritual redemption. There are many times when the Lord must be a “sign of contradiction” (cf *Lk* 2:34-35), shaking up our false securities to bring us to salvation. And in that moment it seems that we do not have peace, but it is the Lord Who places us on this path to arrive at the peace that He Himself will grant us.

Regarding this point, we must remember that the Lord means that His peace is different than the human one, that of the world, when He said: “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give it to you” (*Jn* 14:27). That of Jesus is another peace, different to the worldly one.

Let us ask ourselves: how does the world give peace? If we think of armed conflicts, wars normally come to an end in two ways: either with the defeat of one of the two parties, or through a peace treaty. We cannot but hope and pray that the second of the two is always the one opted for; but we must consider that history contains an infinite series of peace treaties broken by successive wars, or by the transformation of those wars in other ways or in other places. Even in our own time, a “piecemeal” war is being fought on various fronts and in various ways.[1] We have to at least suspect that in the globalised context, composed primarily of economic or financial interests, the “peace” desired by some corresponds to the “war” of others. And this is not the peace of Christ!

How does the Lord Jesus “give” His peace instead? We heard Saint Paul say that the peace of Christ is “*making both one*” (cf *Eph* 2:14), abolishing enmity and reconciling. The path to accomplish this peacemaking is His body. He, in fact, reconciles all things and makes peace with the blood of His cross, as the same Apostles says in another place (cf *Col* 1:20).

And here I ask myself, we can all ask ourselves, who are the “peacemakers”, then? The seventh beatitude is the most active. It is explicitly operative. The verbal expression is analogous to that used in connection with creation in the first verse of the Bible. It indicates initiative and industriousness.

By its nature, love is creative - love is always creative - and seeks reconciliation at all costs. They are called children of God who have learned the art of peace and exercise it, knowing that there is no reconciliation without the gift of one’s own life, and that peace must be sought always and in every case. Always and in every case: do not forget this! It must be sought in this way. This is not an autonomous fruit of one’s own capabilities. It is a manifestation of the graced received by Christ, who is our peace, who has made us children of God.

True *shalòm* and true interior equilibrium flow from the peace of Christ that comes from His Cross and generates humanity anew. It has been incarnated in an infinite host of inventive and creative Saints who, out of love, fashioned always new ways. The Saints who build peace. This life as children of God, which by the blood of Christ goes in search to find one’s brothers and sisters, is true happiness. Blessed are those who take this path.

And Happy Easter once again to everyone, in the peace of Christ!

1 See *Homily at the Military Memorial in Redipuglia*, 13 September 2014; *Homily in Sarajevo*, 6 June 2015; *Address to the Pontifical Council for Legislative Texts*, 21 February 2020.

Greeting in English

I greet the English-speaking faithful joining us through the media. In the joy of the Risen Christ, I invoke upon

you and your families the loving mercy of God our Father. May the Lord bless you!
