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The Pope's words at the Angelus prayer

At midday today 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 his introduction the Marian prayer:

Before the Angelus

Dear brothers and sisters, good afternoon!

On this next to the last Sunday of the liturgical year, the Gospel presents us the well-known Parable of the Talents (cf. *Mt 25:14-30*). It is part of Jesus' discourse on the end times, which immediately precedes His passion, death and resurrection. The parable describes a rich gentleman who has to go away and, foreseeing a long absence, entrusts his property to three of his servants: to the first he entrusts five talents; to the second, two; to the third, one. Jesus specifies that the distribution is made "each according to his ability" (v. 15). The Lord does so with all of us: He knows us well; He knows we are not all equal and does not wish to favour anyone to the detriment of the others, but entrusts an amount to each one according to his or her abilities.

During the master's absence, the first two servants are very busy, to the point of doubling the amount entrusted to them. It is not so with the third servant, who hides the talent in a hole: to avoid risks, he leaves it there, safe from thieves, but without making it bear fruit. The moment comes for the master's return, who calls the servants to settle accounts. The first two present the good fruit of their efforts; they have worked and the master praises them, compensates them and invites them to partake in his feast, in his joy. The third, however, realizing he is at fault, immediately begins to justify himself, saying: "Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not winnow; so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours" (vv. 24-25). He defends his laziness by accusing his master of being "hard". This is an attitude that we have too: we defend ourselves, many times, by accusing others. But they are not at fault: the fault is ours; the flaw is ours. And this servant accuses others, he accuses the master in order to justify himself.

We too, many times, do the same. So the master rebukes him: he calls the servant “wicked and slothful” (v. 26); he has the talent taken from him and has him cast out of his house.

This parable applies to everyone but, as always, to Christians in particular. Today too, it is very topical: today is the Day of the Poor, where the Church tells us Christians: “Extend a hand to the poor. Reach out a hand to the poor. You are not alone in life: there are people who need you. Do not be selfish; reach out a hand to the poor. We have all received from God a “patrimony” as human beings, a human richness, whatever it may be. And as disciples of Christ we have also received the faith, the Gospel, the Holy Spirit, the Sacraments, and so many other things. These gifts need to be used to do good, to do good in this life, in service to God and to our brothers and sisters. And today the Church tells you, she tells us: “Use what God has given you and look at the poor. Look: there are so many of them; even in our cities, in the centre of our city, there are many. Do good!”

At times, we think that to be Christian means not to do harm. And not doing harm is good. But not doing good is not good. We must do good, to come out of ourselves and look, look at those who have more need. There is so much hunger, even in the heart of our cities; and many times we enter into that logic of indifference: the poor person is there, and we look the other way. Reach out your hand to the poor person: it is Christ. Some say: “But these priests, these bishops who talk about the poor, the poor.... We want them to talk to us about eternal life!”. Look, brother and sister, the poor are at the centre of the Gospel; it is Jesus who taught us to speak to the poor; it is Jesus who came for the poor. Reach out your hand to the poor. You have received many things, and you let your brother, your sister die of hunger?

Dear brothers and sisters, may each one say in his or her heart what Jesus tells us today; repeat in your heart: “Reach out your hand to the poor”. And Jesus tells us something else: “You know, I am the poor person. I am the poor”.

The Virgin Mary received a great gift: Jesus Himself, but she did not keep Him to herself; she gave Him to the world, to His people. Let us learn from her to reach out a hand to the poor.

After the Angelus

Dear brothers and sisters! I am close in prayer to the population of the Philippines, who are suffering because of the destruction and above all the flooding caused by a strong typhoon. I express my solidarity to the poorest families who have been subjected to these calamities, and my support to those who are trying to aid them.

My thought also goes to the Ivory Coast, which is celebrating today the national Day of Peace, in a context of social and political tensions which, unfortunately have caused many victims. I join in prayer to obtain the gift of national harmony from the Lord, and I exhort all sons and daughters of that dear country to cooperate responsibly for reconciliation and peaceful coexistence. I encourage in particular the different political actors to re-establish a climate of mutual trust and dialogue, in the quest for just solutions that protect and promote the common good.

Yesterday, in a hospital facility in Romania, where various patients stricken with the coronavirus were admitted, a fire broke out which claimed several victims. I express my closeness and pray for them. Let us pray for them.

I greet all of you, faithful of Rome and pilgrims from various countries. Do not forget, today, that that voice of the Church rings in our heart: “Reach out your hand to the poor. Because, you know, the poor person is Christ”. I am delighted, in particular, for the presence of the Hösel children's choir (Germany). Thank you for your songs!

I wish everyone a happy Sunday. Please, do not forget to pray for me. Enjoy your lunch! *Arrivederci!*

