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Opening of the 92nd Judicial year of the Vatican City State Tribunal

This morning, in the Vatican Apostolic Palace, the Holy Father Francis presided at the inauguration of the 92nd Judicial Year of the Vatican City State Tribunal, in the presence of the President of the Tribunal, the Promoter of Justice, the officials, the attorneys, the collaborators and the Prime Minister of the Italian government, Mario Draghi.

After the address of homage by the Promoter of Justice, Professor Gian Piero Milano, the Pope gave the following address to those present:

Address of the Holy Father

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

I am pleased to meet you for the inauguration of the 92nd judicial year of the Tribunal of the Vatican City State. I extend my cordial greetings to you all, I thank Dr Pignatone and Professor Milano, and I am grateful to the Prime Minister of the Italian Government, Mario Draghi, for his presence. And I cannot omit to mention the late Professor Giuseppe Dalla Torre, who left us last year.

The demands of the pandemic have led to today's ceremony being held in this "Hall of Blessings", situated between Saint Peter's Basilica and the Piazza. It is from here that the Popes impart the *Urbi et Orbi* blessing to the faithful, to Rome and to the world, on the main solemnities. On the opposite side, the Aula overlooks the central nave of the Basilica, in the visual perspective of the glory of the Holy Spirit, which illuminates the apse. A position - physical and spiritual - central, between the open and at the same time enclosed space of Bernini's Colonnade, and that of the professed and celebrated faith around the tomb of Peter. And I am reminded of Pius XI's courage in wanting to return to this balcony to give the blessing, because there was a warehouse between the curtains and the balcony, and when he asked to give this blessing, they had to wait until after more than seventy years to clean this warehouse a little so that the Pope could look out over the square.

In this singular position one might see the meaning and the task of the Church, constituted and sent by Christ the Lord to carry out the mission of upholding the truth and - as the Second Vatican Council teaches - to

"proclaim, by its own example, humility and self-sacrifice" (Constitution *Lumen gentium*, 8), with God's own style: closeness, compassion, tenderness. With this mandate the Church enters history and becomes a place of encounter between peoples and of reconciliation between men, to lead them, with the Word and the Sacraments, with Grace and the examples of life, to the faith, freedom and peace of Christ (cf. Decree *Ad gentes*, 9).

This is the second consecutive year I have participated in the opening of the judicial year. I am moved by a feeling of gratitude and recognition, because I am aware how demanding, sometimes arduous, your work is, which you carry out every day to foster the order of interpersonal and social relations, which find balance in the work of justice.

The normative changes to which the Promotor of Justice referred have typified the Vatican system in recent years. These changes will be more fruitful to the extent that they are accompanied by further reforms in the criminal law, especially in the fight against financial crime, and by the intensification of other activities aimed at facilitating and speeding up international cooperation between Vatican investigative bodies and their counterparts in other countries, as well as the initiatives taken by the Judicial Police of our State.

In this regard, it is now urgent to identify and introduce, by means of appropriate regulations or memoranda of understanding, new and more incisive forms of cooperation, as requested by financial market supervisory institutions active at international level. In this context, I hope that we will soon be able to reach an agreement at the competent level, in order to make cooperation more rapid and effective. The results achieved so far would encourage the work undertaken thus far to be continued, in order to overcome practices that do not always meet the need for promptness required by the dynamics of investigation.

I urge all to ensure that the initiatives recently undertaken and those to be undertaken for the absolute transparency of the institutional activities of the Vatican State, especially in the economic and financial field, may always be inspired by the founding principles of ecclesial life and, at the same time, take due account of the parameters and "good practices" current at the international level, and appear exemplary, as is required of a reality such as the Catholic Church.

All the workers in this field, and all holders of institutional offices, should therefore conduct themselves in a way that, while denoting a proactive repentance - where necessary - with regard to the past, is also irreproachable and exemplary for the present and the future.

On this point, it will be necessary to take into account the overriding need for the current procedural system - also by means of appropriate changes in the law - to ensure the equality of all members of the Church and their equal dignity and position, without privileges that date back to earlier times and are no longer in keeping with the responsibilities that each person has in building up the Church. This requires solidity of faith and consistency of behaviour and actions.

From this perspective and with these aims, the fact of being marginal in the dynamics of economic relations does not exempt us, both as a community of faithful and as individuals, from a particular duty of witness. We are called to bear witness, tangibly and credibly, in our respective roles and tasks, to the immense heritage of values that characterises the Church's mission, her being "salt and light" in society and in the international community, especially in moments of crisis such as the present.

I urge you to reflect on the fact that, by carrying out day after day your discreet and patient work, you offer a precious contribution so that the Church, in this very small State of Vatican City, may give a good example of what she teaches in her social Magisterium.

I therefore invite all those who are called to work in the cause of justice - an eminent cardinal virtue - not to be afraid to waste time by devoting plenty of it to prayer. In prayer, and only in prayer, do we draw from God, from his Word, that inner serenity which enables us to fulfil our duties with magnanimity, equity and foresight.

The language of painting and sculpture often depicts Justice weighing opposing interests or situations with the scales in one hand and defending rights with the sword in the other. Christian iconography also adds a not insignificant detail to the former artistic tradition: the eyes of Justice are not blindfolded, but turned upwards, looking to Heaven, because only in Heaven does true justice exist.

To all of you, I extend my heartfelt wish that this awareness will accompany and inspire you in the year we are inaugurating today, in your daily work in the service of justice. For this I pray and accompany you with my blessing. And you too, please pray for me. Thank you!
