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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 are the Pope's words of introduction to the Marian prayer:

Before the Angelus

Dear brothers and sisters, *buongiorno!*

The Gospel passage of today's liturgy opens with a phrase of Jesus that leaves us astonished: "The sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will be falling from heaven" (*Mk 13:24-25*). But what now, even the Lord was a doomsdayer? No, this is certainly not His intention. He wants us to understand that sooner or later everything in this world passes. Even the sun, the moon and the stars that make up the "firmament" - a word that indicates "firmness", "stability" - are destined to pass away.

In the end, though, Jesus says what does not fall: "Heaven and earth will pass away", He says, "*but my words will not pass away*" (v. 31). The Lord's words will not pass away. He makes a distinction between the *penultimate* things, which pass, and the *ultimate* things, that remain. It is a message for us, to guide us in our important decisions in life, to guide us on what it is worth investing our life. In something transitory, or in the words of the Lord that remain forever? Obviously on these. But it is not easy. Indeed, the things that come before our senses and give us immediate satisfaction attract us, while the words of the Lord, although beautiful, go beyond the immediate and require patience. We are tempted to cling to what we see and touch and what seems safer to us. It is human, that is temptation. But this is a deception, because "heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away". So, here is the invitation: do not build your life on sand. When someone builds a house, they dig deep and lay a solid foundation. Only a fool would say that money would be wasted on something that cannot be seen. According to Jesus, the faithful disciple is the one who founds his life on the rock, which is his Word (cf. *Mt 7:24-27*), which does not pass away, on the firmness of the Word of Jesus: this is

the foundation of the life that Jesus wants from us, and which will not pass away.

And now we wonder – always, when we read the Word of God, questions arise - what is the centre, what is the beating heart of the Word of God? In short, what is it that gives solidity to life, and will never end? Saint Paul tells us. The very centre, the beating heart, that which gives solidity, is love: “*Love never ends*” (1 Cor 13:8), says Saint Paul: love. Those who do good, are investing in eternity. When we see a person who is generous and helpful, meek, patient, who is not envious, does not gossip, does not brag, is not puffed-up with pride, does not lack respect (cf. 1 Cor 13:4-7), this is a person who builds Heaven on earth. They may not be noticed or have a career, they will not make the news, and yet, what they do will not be lost because good is never lost, good lasts forever.

And we, brothers and sisters, let us ask ourselves: what are we investing our lives in? On things that pass, such as money, success, appearance, physical well-being? We will take away none of these things. Are we attached to earthly things, as if we will live here forever? When we are young and healthy, everything is fine, but when the time comes to depart, we have to leave everything behind.

The Word of God warns us today: this world will pass away. And only love will remain. To base one's life on the Word of God, therefore, is not an escape from history, but an immersion into earthly realities in order to make them solid, to transform them with love, imprinting on them the sign of eternity, the sign of God. Here then is some advice for making important choices. When I don't know what to do, how do make a definitive choice, an important decision, a decision that involves Jesus' love, what must I do? Before deciding, let us imagine that we are standing in front of Jesus, as at the end of life, before Him who is love. And imagining ourselves there, in His presence, at the threshold of eternity, we make the decision for today. We must decide in this way: always looking to eternity, looking at Jesus. It may not be the easiest, it may not be the most immediate, but it will be the right one (cf. Saint Ignatius of Loyola, *Spiritual Exercises*, 187), that is sure.

May Our Lady help us to make the important choices in life as she did: according to love, according to God.

After the Angelus

Dear Brothers and Sisters

Today we celebrate the Fifth World Day of the Poor, which began as a fruit of the Jubilee of Mercy. This year's theme is Jesus' word: “The poor you will always have with you” (Mk 14:7). And it is true: humanity progresses, develops, but the poor are always with us, there are always the poor, and in them Christ is present, Christ is present in the poor. The day before yesterday, in Assisi, we experienced a powerful moment of witness and prayer, which I invite you to repeat, as it will do you good. And I am grateful for the many initiatives of solidarity that have been organised in dioceses and parishes throughout the world.

The cry of the poor, united with the cry of the Earth, resounded in recent days at the United Nations Climate Change Summit COP26 in Glasgow. I encourage all those with political and economic responsibilities to act now with courage and vision; at the same time, I invite all people of good will to exercise active citizenship for the care of the common home. To this end, today, World Day of the Poor, registration opens for the *Laudato si'* platform, which promotes integral ecology.

Today is also World Diabetes Day, a chronic disease that afflicts many people, including young people and children. I pray for all of them and for those who share their fatigue every day, as well as for the health care workers and volunteers who assist them.

And now I greet all of you, faithful of Rome and pilgrims from various countries. I see so many flags there... Especially those who have come from Spain and Poland. I greet the scout group from Palestrina and the faithful

from the parish of *San Timoteo* in Rome and from the parish of *Bozzolo*.

I wish you all a blessed Sunday. And please do not forget to pray for me. Enjoy your meal, and *arrivederci!*
