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The Pope's words at the Angelus prayer

Before the Angelus

After the Angelus

At midday today, Third 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!

Today's Gospel presents, in John's version, the episode in which Jesus drives out the merchants from the temple of Jerusalem (cf. *Jn* 2: 13-25). He performs this gesture with the aid of a whip of cords, and overturned the tables, saying: "You shall not make my Father's house a house of trade!" (v. 16). This decisive act, carried out close to Passover, made an impression on the crown and aroused the hostility of the religious authorities and of all those who felt that their economic interests were under threat. But how should we interpret it? Certainly not as a violent action, as it is true that it did not cause the intervention of the guardians of public order, the police. No! But it was understood as an action typical of the prophets who, in God's name, often denounced abuses and excesses. The question posed was that of authority. Indeed, the Jews asked Jesus: "What sign have you to show us for this doing?" (v. 18), namely, what authority do you have to do these things? As if they required the demonstration that He was truly acting in the name of God.

To interpret Jesus' gesture of cleansing the house of God, His disciples used a biblical text from Psalm 69: "Zeal for your house consumes me" (v. 9); so says the Psalm: "Zeal for your house consumes me". This Psalm is an

invocation of help in a situation of extreme danger due to the hatred of enemies: the situation that Jesus will experience in His Passion. Zeal for His Father and for His cause will lead Him to the cross: His is the zeal of love that leads to the sacrifice of Himself, not that false love that presumes to serve God through violence. Indeed, the “sign” that Jesus will give, as proof of His authority, is precisely His Death and Resurrection. “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up” He says (v. 19). And the evangelist notes: “He spoke of the temple of His body” (v. 21). With Jesus’ Pasch a *new worship* begins, in the new temple, the worship of love, and He Himself is the *new temple*.

Jesus’ attitude, recounted in today’s Gospel reading, urges us to live our lives seeking not our own advantage and interests, but *for the glory of God Who is love*. We are called always to keep in mind those powerful words of Jesus: “You shall not make my Father’s house a house of trade!” (v. 16). It is awful when the Church slips on this attitude of making God’s house a market. These words help us to reject the danger of making our soul, which is God’s abode, a marketplace, living in constant search of our own advantage instead of in generous and solidary love. Jesus’ teaching is always timely, not only for the ecclesial communities but also for individuals, for civil communities and for society. In fact, there is a common temptation to take advantage of good and at times dutiful activities to cultivate private if not outright unlawful interests. It is a grave danger, especially when it exploits God Himself and the worship due to Him, or the service to man, His image. This is why Jesus used “strong means” that time, to rouse us from this mortal danger.

May the Virgin Mary support us in our commitment to making Lent a good opportunity to acknowledge God as the only Lord of our life, removing every form of idolatry from our heart and from our deeds.

After the Angelus

Dear brothers and sisters,

I greet you all, from Rome, from Italy and from various Countries, in particular pilgrims from the diocese of Granada, Málaga and Córdoba, in Spain.

I greet the numerous parish groups, including the faithful of Spinaceto, Milan and Naples, as well as the young people of Azzano Mella and confirmands from the diocese of Vicenza, whom I encourage – I encourage! – to bear witness to the Gospel with joy, especially among their peers.

And I wish you all a good Sunday! Please, do not forget to pray for me.

Have a good lunch, and goodbye.
