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General Audience

Catechesis of the Holy Father

Greetings in various languages

This morning's General Audience took place at 9.30 a.m. in the Paul VI Hall, where the Holy Father Francis met with groups of pilgrims and faithful from Italy and all over the world.

In his address in Italian the Pope concluded his cycle of catechesis on the Ten Commandments, focusing on the theme "The new law in Christ and desires according to the Spirit" (Bible passage: from Saint Paul's *Letter to the Galatians*, 5: 16-18, 22-24).

After summarising his catechesis in several languages, the Holy Father addressed special greetings to the groups of faithful present.

The General Audience concluded with the recital of the *Pater Noster* and the Apostolic Blessing.

Catechesis of the Holy Father

Dear brothers and sisters, good morning!

In today's catechesis, which concludes the cycle on the Ten Commandments, we can use as a key theme that of *desires*, which enables us to retrace the journey we have made and to summarize the steps taken by reading the text of the Decalogue, always in the light of full revelation in Christ .

We started out from *gratitude* as the basis of the relationship of trust and obedience: God, we have seen, does not ask for anything before giving us much more. He invites us to obedience to redeem ourselves from the deception of idolatries that have so much power over us. In fact, to seek one's own fulfilment in the idols of this world empties us and enslaves us, while what gives us stature and consistency is the relationship with He Who, in Christ, makes us children from His fatherhood (cf. *Eph 3,14- 16*).

This implies a process of blessing and liberation, which is true, authentic repose. As the Psalm says: "Truly my soul finds rest in God; my salvation comes from him." (*Ps 62: 2*).

This liberated life becomes the acceptance of our personal history and reconciles us with what, from infancy to the present, we have lived, making us adults and capable of giving the right weight to the realities and people of our lives. On this path we enter into the relationship with our neighbour, which, starting from the love that God shows in Jesus Christ, is a call to the beauty of *fidelity, generosity and authenticity*.

But in order to live this way – that is, in the beauty of fidelity, generosity and authenticity – we need a new heart, uninhabited by the Holy Spirit (cf. *Ez 11: 19; 36: 26*). I ask myself: how does this "transplant" of the heart, from the old heart to the new heart, take place? Through the gift of *new desires* (see *Rom 8: 6*); which are sown in us by the grace of God, especially through the Ten Commandments brought to completion by Jesus, as He teaches in the "discourse of the mountain" (cf. *Mt 5: 17-48*). In fact, in contemplating the life described in the Decalogue, that is a grateful, free, authentic, blessing, adult life, as guardian and lover of life, faithful, generous and sincere, we, almost without realizing it, find ourselves before Christ. The Decalogue is His "X-ray", he describes it as a photographic negative that lets His face appear – like the Holy Shroud. And so the Holy Spirit makes our heart fruitful by placing in it the desires that are a gift of His, the desires of the Spirit. To desire according to the Spirit, to desire with the rhythm of the Spirit, to desire with the music of the Spirit.

Looking at Christ we see beauty, goodness and truth. And the Spirit generates a life which, following these desires, triggers hope, faith and love in us.

Thus we discover better what it means that the Lord Jesus did not come to abolish the law but to fulfil it, to make it grow, and while the law according to the flesh was a series of prescriptions and prohibitions, according to the Spirit this same law becomes life (cf. *Jn 6:63; Eph 2:15*), because it is no longer a norm but the very flesh of Christ, Who loves us, seeks us, forgives us, comforts us and in His Body reconciles communion with the Father, lost for the disobedience of sin. And so the literary negativity, the negativity in the expression of the commandments – "do not steal", "do not insult", "do not kill" - that "not" becomes a positive attitude: love, make room for others in my heart, all desires that sow positivity. And this is the fullness of the law that Jesus came to bring us.

In Christ, and only in him, the Decalogue stops being condemned (cf. *Rom 8: 1*) and becomes the authentic truth of human life, that is, the desire for love – here is born a desire for good, to do good – desire for joy, desire for peace, magnanimity, benevolence, goodness, fidelity, meekness, self-control. From "no" we pass to "yes": the positive attitude of a heart that opens with the power of the Holy Spirit.

This is why it is necessary to look for Christ in the Decalogue: to make our heart fruitful so that it may be full of love, and open itself to the work of God. When man favours the desire to live according to Christ, then he opens the door to salvation, which can not but arrive, because God the Father is generous and, as the Catechism says, "God thirsts that we may thirst for Him" (2560).

If it is evil desires that ruin man (cf. *Mt 15: 18-20*), the Spirit lays down in our hearts His holy desires, which are the seed of new life (cf. *1 Jn 3. 9*). New life in fact is not the titanic effort to be consistent with a norm, but new life is the Spirit of God Who begins to guide us to its fruits, in a happy synergy between our joy of being loved and His joy in loving us. The two joys meet: the joy of God to love us and our joy of being loved.

This is what the Decalogue is for us Christians: to contemplate Christ so as to open up to receive His heart, to receive His desires, to receive His Holy Spirit.

Greetings in various languages

French

I cordially greet French-speaking pilgrims, especially the group of sick and disabled people from Lyon. Brothers and sisters let the Holy Spirit make the holy desire of a new life germinate in us, that is the true desire of God, that of loving and being loved by Him. God bless you!

English

I greet the English-speaking pilgrims and visitors taking part in today's audience, especially those from England, Australia and the United States of America. Upon all of you, and your families, I invoke the Lord's blessings of joy and peace. God bless you!

German

I extend a warm greeting to the German-speaking pilgrims. God's desire makes us find our true identity. Let us ask ourselves what the deepest aspiration of our heart is and if we truly bring the joy of the Holy Spirit to our neighbours. May the Lord accompany you on your journey.

Spanish

I greet cordially the Spanish-speaking pilgrims from Spain and Latin America, and in particular the group of bishops and priests of the Dominican Republic celebrating their forty years of priesthood. I encourage everyone to discover Christ in the Decalogue, to let our hearts, full of love, be open to His action and thus welcome the desire to live the life He proposes to us. Thank you.

Portuguese

I extend a cordial greeting to the Portuguese-speaking pilgrims present here. In concluding the liturgical year, we are invited to go to meet Jesus Who awaits us every day in the sacraments, in prayer and in our neighbour, especially in the needy. God bless you!

Arabic

I extend a cordial welcome to Arabic-speaking pilgrims, especially those from the Middle East! Dear brothers and sisters, the Holy Spirit fertilizes our heart by placing in it the desires that are a gift of His, and generates a life that, following these desires, triggers hope, faith and love in us. Let us call upon Him more often, so that He may guide us on the path of the true disciples of Jesus. May the Lord bless you!

Polish

I cordially greet the Polish pilgrims and especially the organizers of the exhibition, which opened yesterday at the Pontifical Urban University, dedicated to the Polish Ulm family, shot by the German Nazis during World War II for having hidden and given help to the Jews. In the context of the meditations on the Decalogue, this numerous Family of Servants of God, awaiting beatification, is for all of us an example of fidelity to God and to His commandments, of love of neighbour and respect for human dignity. I bless you all from the heart.

Lithuanian

I am pleased to greet the pilgrims from Lithuania, who came with the bishops in thanksgiving for my recent trip to that country. I also greet the community of the Pontifical Lithuanian College of San Casimiro, which celebrates its 70th anniversary! Dear brothers and sisters, the memory of my visit to Lithuania remains alive in me. Thank you all for the welcome! May the Lord be your courage and bless you!

Italian

I extend a cordial welcome to Italian-speaking pilgrims.

I am pleased to welcome the Priests of the Sacred Heart of Jesus-Dehonians; the Priests who participate in the "Second Announcement Project", with the bishop of Albano, Msgr. Marcello Semeraro and the members of the Claretian Family.

I greet the parishes, especially those of Canosa di Puglia and Barletta; the Italian Multiple Sclerosis Association; the Nova Facility Group of Treviso; the Association of new special talents, from Verona, and the Association for the fight against breast tumours.

A particular thought I address to the young, the elderly, the sick and the newlyweds.

Next Sunday we will begin the liturgical season of Advent. Let us prepare our hearts to welcome Jesus the Saviour; let us recognize Christ's encounter with humanity at Christmas, especially with those who still live on the margins of society, in need and suffering, and in so many wars.
