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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 parable in the Gospel of today's liturgy (cf. Lk 16:1-13) seems a bit difficult to understand for us. Jesus tells a story about corruption: a dishonest manager who steals, and then after being discovered by his master, acts shrewdly to get out of the situation. We ask ourselves: what is this shrewdness of the corrupt manager about and what does Jesus want to tell us?

In this story we see how the corrupt manager ends up in trouble because he took advantage of his master's property. Now he must give an account, and he will lose his job. But he does not give up, he does not resign himself to his fate and does not play the victim. On the contrary, he acts immediately with shrewdness, he looks for a solution and is creative. Jesus uses this story as a way to put before us a provocation when he says: "The children of this age are more shrewd in dealing with their own generation than are the children of light." (v. 8) It happens that those who move in darkness, by certain worldly standards, know how to get by even when in trouble, they know how to be more shrewd than others. Instead, Jesus' disciples, namely ourselves, sometimes have fallen asleep or are naive, not knowing how to take the initiative to find ways out of difficulties (cf. *Evangelii gaudium*, 24). For example, I am thinking of times of personal or social crisis, but also of Church crisis: sometimes we allow discouragement to overcome us or we start to complain and play the victim. Instead, Jesus says we can also be clever in following the Gospel, awake and attentive to discern reality and be creative to find good solutions for us and others.

But there is another teaching that Jesus gives us. Indeed, what is the shrewdness of the manager about we ask? He decides to give a discount to those who were in debt, and so they become his friends and he hopes they can help him when his master fires him. Before he was accumulating wealth for himself, but now he uses it in the same way by stealing to make friends who can help him in the future. Jesus then gives us a teaching on how we use material goods: "And I tell you, make friends for yourselves by means of dishonest wealth so that when it is gone, they may welcome you into the eternal homes." (v. 9). To inherit eternal life then, there is no need to accumulate goods in this world, but what matters is the love we will have expressed in our fraternal relations. This is what Jesus asks of us: do not use the goods of this world only for yourselves and selfishly, but use them to create friendship, to create good relationships, to act with charity, to promote fraternity and to show care for the weakest.

Brothers and sisters, even in our world today there are stories of corruption like the one in the Gospel: dishonest conduct, unfair policies, selfishness that dominates the choices of individuals and institutions, and many other murky situations. But we Christians are not allowed to become discouraged, or worse, to let go of things, remaining indifferent. On the contrary, we are called to be creative in doing good with the prudence and the cleverness of the Gospel, using the goods of this world, not only material but all of the gifts we have received from the Lord, not to enrich ourselves, but to generate fraternal love and social fellowship. This is very important: through our behavior we can create social friendship.

Let us pray to the Blessed Virgin Mary so that she may help us be like herself poor in spirit and rich in works of charity for one another.

After the Angelus

Dear brothers and sisters!

I thank God for the journey I was able to make in recent days to Kazakhstan for the VII Congress of the Leaders of World and Traditional Religions. I am going to talk about it next Wednesday at the General Audience.

I am saddened by the recent fighting between Azerbaijan and Armenia. I express my spiritual closeness to the families of the victims, and I urge the parties to respect the ceasefire in view of a peace agreement. Let us not forget that peace is possible when weapons are silenced and dialogue begins! And let us continue to pray for the suffering people of Ukraine and for peace in every land bloodied by war.

I wish to assure my prayers for the people of the Marches (region of Italy) hit by severe flooding. I pray for those who died and their families, for the injured and for those who have suffered serious damage. May the Lord give strength to those communities!

I greet all of you, Romans and pilgrims from various countries. In particular, I greet the Religious of Mary Immaculate from various communities in Africa, Latin America, Asia and Europe; as well as the faithful of Seville and the "Gruppo Secolare Nostra Signora del Cenacolo."

I greet the group from Caturano, the Diocese of Capua; the young people of the "Cresima of Gazzaniga" (Bergamo) and those from Soliera (Modena); members of the "Figli in Cielo" community; the Pro Loco of Lazio and the group of veterinary doctors from the province of Verona with their families. I also greet the young people of the "The Economy of Francesco", who are here in the square today: always go forward! I will see you soon in Assisi.

I address a special thought to the poor and the volunteers of the "Casa di Zaccheo" in Mesagne: may the Lord bless you and may Our Lady keep you.

I wish everyone a good Sunday. Please do not forget to pray for me. Have a good lunch and arrivederci!
