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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*, blessed Sunday!

Today's Gospel takes us to Jerusalem, in the most sacred place: the temple. There, around Jesus, some people speak about the magnificence of that grandiose building, "adorned with costly stones" (Lk 21:5). But the Lord states, "there will not be left a stone upon another stone that will not be thrown down" (Lk 21:6). He then adds to the story, explaining how in history almost everything collapses: there will be, he says, revolutions and wars, earthquakes and famines, pestilence and persecution (cf. vv. 9-17). As if to say: one should not place too much trust in earthly realities, which pass. These are wise words, which can however make us somewhat bitter. There are already many things going wrong. Why does the Lord even make such negative pronouncements? In reality his intention is not to be negative, it is otherwise – to give us a valuable teaching, that is, the way out of all this precariousness. And what is the way out? How can we come out of this reality that passes and passes, and will be no more?

It lies in a word that will perhaps surprise us. Christ reveals it in the final phrase of the Gospel, when he says: "By your perseverance you will secure your lives" (v. 19). *Perseverance*. What is perseverance? The word indicates being "very strict"; but strict in what sense? With oneself, considering oneself not up to standard? No. With others, becoming rigid and inflexible? Not this either. Jesus asks us to be "strict", uncompromising, persistent in what he has at heart, in what counts. Because, what truly counts, very often does not coincide with what attracts our interest. Like those people at the temple, we often prioritize the work of our hands, our achievements, our religious and civil traditions, our sacred and social symbols. This is fine, but we accord too

much priority to them. These things are important, but they pass away. Instead, Jesus says to concentrate on what remains, to avoid devoting our life to building something that will then be destroyed, like that temple, and forgetting to build what will not collapse, to build on his word, on love, on goodness. To be persevering, to be strict and resolute in building on what does not pass away.

This, then, is perseverance: *building goodness every day*. To persevere is to remain constant in goodness, especially when the reality around us urges us to do otherwise. Let us reflect on a few examples: I know that prayer is important, but, like everyone, I too always have a lot to do, and so I put it off: “No, I am busy now, I can’t, I’ll do it later”. Or, I see many crafty people who take advantage of situations, who dodge the rules, and so I too stop observing them and persevering in justice and legality: “But if these scoundrels do it, so will I!”. Beware of this! And again: I carry out service in the Church, for the community, for the poor, but I see that many people in their free time think only of enjoying themselves, and so I feel like giving up and do what they do. Because I do not see results, or I get bored, or it does not make me happy.

Persevering, instead, is *remaining* in goodness. Let us ask ourselves: what is my perseverance like? Am I constant, or do I live faith, justice and charity according to the moment: I pray if I feel like it; I am fair, willing and helpful if it suits me; whereas if I am dissatisfied, if no-one thanks me, do I stop? In short, do my prayer and service depend on circumstances or on a heart that is steadfast in the Lord? If we persevere – Jesus reminds us – we have nothing to fear, even in the sad and ugly events of life, not even in the evil we see around us, because we remain grounded in the good. Dostoevsky wrote: “Have no fear of men’s sin. Love a man even in his sin, for that is the semblance of Divine Love and is the highest love on earth” (*The Brothers Karamazov*, II, 6, 3g). Perseverance is the reflection in the world of God’s love, because God’s love is faithful, it is persevering, it never changes.

May Our Lady, servant of the Lord, persevering in prayer (cf. *Acts* 1:12), fortify our perseverance.

After the Angelus

Dear brothers and sisters!

Tomorrow will be the first anniversary of the launch of the *Laudato si’* Platform for Action, which promotes ecological conversion and lifestyles consistent with it. I would like to thank all those who have embraced this initiative: there are around six thousand participants, including individuals, families, associations, businesses, and religious, cultural and healthcare institutions. It is an excellent start to a seven-year journey aimed at responding to the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor. I encourage this mission, crucial for the future of humanity, so that it may foster in everyone a genuine commitment to the care of creation.

From this perspective, I would like to recall the COP27 Summit on Climate Change, which is taking place in Egypt. I hope that steps forward will be made, with courage and determination, in the wake of the Paris Agreement.

Let us always remain close to our brothers and sisters in martyred Ukraine. Close in prayer and with concrete solidarity. Peace is possible! Let us not resign ourselves to war.

And I greet you all, pilgrims from Italy and various countries, families, parishes, associations and individual faithful. In particular, I greet the “El Shaddai” charismatic group from the United States of America, the Uruguayan “bandoneon” musicians – I see your flag there, bravo! – the Romanian Greek-Catholic Mission of Paris, the school pastoral representatives from Limoges and Tulle with their respective bishops, and the members of the Eritrean community of Milan, to whom I assure my prayer for their country. I am glad to welcome the altar servers of Ovada, the “Nuova Famiglia” cooperative of Monza, the civil protection of Lecco, the faithful of Perugia, Pisa, Sassari, Catania and Bisceglie, and the boys and girls of the *Immacolata*.

I wish you all a good Sunday. Please, do not forget to pray for me. Enjoy your lunch, and *arrivederci!*
