



SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE **BOLLETTINO**

HOLY SEE PRESS OFFICE BUREAU DE PRESSE DU SAINT-SIÈGE PRESSEAMT DES HEILIGEN STUHLS
OFICINA DE PRENSA DE LA SANTA SEDE SALA DE IMPRENSA DA SANTA SÉ
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N. 231023b

Sunday 22.10.2023

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 of today's Liturgy tells us about some pharisees who join with the Herodians to set a trap for Jesus. They were always trying to set traps for Him. They go to Him and ask: "Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?" (Mt 22:17). It is a ruse: if Jesus legitimizes the tax, He places Himself on the side of a political power that is ill-supported by the people, whereas if He says not to pay it, He can be accused of rebellion against the empire. A veritable trap. However, He escapes this snare. He asks them to show Him a coin, which bears the image of Caesar, and says to them: "Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's" (v. 21). What does this mean?

These words of Jesus have become commonplace, but at times they have been used incorrectly – or at least reductively – to talk about the relations between Church and State, Christians and politics; often they are interpreted as though Jesus wanted to separate "Caesar" from "God", that is, earthly from spiritual reality. At times we too think in this way: faith with its practices is one thing, and daily life is another. And this will not do. No. This is a form of "schizophrenia", as if faith had nothing to do with real life, with the challenges of society, with social justice, with politics and so forth.

In reality, Jesus wants to help us place "Caesar" and "God" each in their proper place. The care for earthly order belongs to Caesar – that is, to politics, to civil institutions, to social and economic processes, and we who are immersed in this reality must give back to society what it offers us, through our contribution as responsible

citizens, taking care of what is entrusted to us, promoting law and justice in the world of work, paying our taxes honestly, committing ourselves to the common good, and so on. At the same time, though, Jesus affirms the fundamental reality: that man belongs to God: *all of man* and *every human being*. And this means that we do not belong to any earthly reality, to any "Caesar". We are the Lord's, and we must not be slaves to any earthly power. On the coin, then, there is the image of the emperor, but Jesus reminds us that our lives are imprinted with the image of God, which nothing and no-one can obscure. The things of this world belong to Caesar, but man and the world itself belong to God: do not forget this!

We understand, then, that Jesus is restoring each one of us to his or her own identity: on the coin of this world there is the image of Caesar, but you – each one of us - which image do you carry within yourself? Let us ask ourselves this question: what image do I carry inside myself? You - whose is the image of your life? Do we remember that we belong to the Lord, or do we let ourselves be shaped by the logic of the world and make work, politics and money our idols to be worshipped?

May the Holy Virgin help us to recognize and honour our dignity and that of every human being.

After the Angelus

Dear brothers and sisters,

Once more my thoughts turn to what is happening in Israel and Palestine. I am very concerned, grieved. I pray and I am close to all those who are suffering: the hostages, the wounded, the victims and their relatives. I think of the serious humanitarian situation in Gaza and I am saddened that the Anglican hospital and the Greek-Orthodox parish have also been hit in recent days. I renew my appeal for spaces to be opened, for humanitarian aid to continue to arrive, and for the hostages to be freed.

War, any war that there is in the world – I also think of tormented Ukraine – is a defeat. War is always a defeat; it is a destruction of human fraternity. Brothers, stop! Stop!

I remind you that next Friday, 27 October, I have proclaimed a day of fasting, prayer and penance, and that evening at 18.00 in Saint Peter's Square we will spend an hour in prayer to implore peace in the world.

Today we celebrate World Mission Sunday, which has the theme: "*Hearts on fire, feet on the move*". Two images that say everything! I urge everyone, in the dioceses and in the parishes, to participate actively.

I greet you all, Romans and pilgrims, in particular the *Siervas de los Pobres hijas del Sagrado Corazón de Jesús* religious sisters, from Granada; the members of the *Centro Académico Romano Fundación*, the Confraternity of the *Señor de los Milagros*, of the Peruvians in Rome; and thank you, thank you for your witness! Keep up the good work, with such beautiful piety.

I greet the members of the "All custodians of humanity" lay missionary movement; the polyphonic "*Sant'Antonio Abate*" choir of Cordenons, and the associations of the faithful from Naples and Casagiove.

I also greet the young people of the "*Casa Giardino*", the "Garden House" of Casalmaggiore; the group of young friends from the Emmanuel Community; the directors and teachers from the "*Jean XXIII*" Catholic School of Toulon, and the students from the "*Saint Croix*" High School of Neuilly.

I wish you all a good Sunday. You too, young people of the *Immaculata*. And please, do not forget to pray for me. Enjoy your lunch, and *arrivederci*!

