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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 approximately eighteen thousand faithful and pilgrims gathered in Saint Peter's Square.

The following are the Pope's words of introduction to the Marian prayer:

Dear brothers and sisters, good Sunday!

Today the Gospel of the liturgy (cf. *Mk* 12:38-44) tells us about Jesus who, in the temple of Jerusalem, denounces before the people the hypocritical attitude of some scribes (cf. vv. 38-40).

These latter were accorded an important role in the community of Israel: they read, transcribed and interpreted the Scriptures. Therefore, they were held in high esteem and people revered them.

Beyond appearances, however, their behaviour often did not correspond to what they taught. They were not consistent. Some, in fact, on the strength of the prestige and power they enjoyed, looked down on others "from above" – this is very ugly, looking down on another person from above – they put on airs and, hiding behind a façade of feigned respectability and legalism, arrogated privileges to themselves and even went so far as to commit outright theft to the detriment of the weakest, such as widows (cf. v. 40). Instead of using the role they were invested with to serve others, they made it an instrument of arrogance and manipulation. And it happened that even prayer, for them, was in danger of no longer being a moment of encounter with the Lord, but an occasion to flaunt respectability and feigned piety, useful for attracting people's attention and gaining approval (cf. *ibid.*). Remember what Jesus says about the prayer of the publican and the pharisee (cf. *Lk* 18:9-14).

They – not all of them – behaved like corrupt people, feeding a social and religious system in which it was normal to take advantage of others behind their backs, especially the most defenceless, committing injustices and ensuring impunity for themselves.

Jesus warned to stay away from these people, to “beware” of them (cf. v. 38), not to imitate them. Indeed, with His word and His example, as we know, He taught very different things about authority. He spoke about it in terms of self-sacrifice and humble service (cf. *Mk* 10:42-45), of maternal and paternal tenderness towards people (cf. *Lk* 11:11-13), especially those most in need (*Lk* 10:25-37). He invites those invested with it to look at others from their position of power, not to humiliate them, but to lift them up, giving them hope and assistance.

So, brothers and sisters, we can ask ourselves: how do I behave in my fields of responsibility? Do I act with humility, or do I vaunt my position? Am I generous and respectful with people, or do I treat them in a rude and authoritarian way? And with my most fragile brothers and sisters, am I close to them, do I know how to bow to help lift them up?

May the Virgin Mary help us fight the temptation of hypocrisy in ourselves – Jesus tells them they are hypocrites, hypocrisy is a great temptation –, and help us to do good, simply and without ostentation.

After the Angelus

Dear brothers and sisters!

Don Giuseppe Torres Padilla, co-founder of the Congregation of the Sisters of the Company of the Cross, was proclaimed Blessed in Seville yesterday. He lived in nineteenth-century Spain, and distinguished himself as a priest confessor and spiritual guide, bearing witness to great charity with those in need. May his example sustain priests in their ministry. A round of applause for the new Blessed!

Three years ago, the *Laudato si' Action Platform* was launched. I thank those who work in support of this initiative. In this regard, I hope that the COP29 Climate Change Conference, which will begin tomorrow in Baku, may make an effective contribution for the protection of our common home.

I am close to the population of the Island of Flores in Indonesia, struck by a volcanic eruption; I pray for the victims, their relatives and the displaced. And I reiterate my remembrance for the inhabitants of Valencia and other parts of Spain, who are facing the consequences of the flood. I will ask you a question: have you prayed for Valencia? Have you thought about making some contribution to help those people? It is just a question.

The news from Mozambique is worrying. I invite everyone to engage in dialogue, tolerance and the tireless search for just solutions. Let us pray for the entire Mozambican population, that the present situation does not cause them to lose faith in the path of democracy, justice and peace.

And let us continue, please, to pray for tormented Ukraine, where even hospitals and other civilian buildings have been struck; and let us pray for Palestine, Israel, Lebanon, Myanmar, and Sudan. Let us pray for peace in all the world.

Today the Italian Church celebrates Thanksgiving Day. I express gratitude to the agricultural sector, and I encourage the cultivation of the land in a way that preserves its fertility also for future generations.

I affectionately greet you all, Romans and pilgrims, and the young people of the *Immacolata*. In particular, the faithful from Kazakhstan, Moscow, New York, Bastia in Corsica, Beja and the Algarve in Portugal, Warsaw, Lublin and other parts of Poland. I greet the Committee for the promotion of the Global Educational Compact, with the representatives of numerous Catholic universities; I greet the Confirmands from Empoli; the volunteers from the Food Bank and the Italian Band of the Transports and Materials Corps. Let us hope that the band will play something beautiful for us!

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