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## Angelus: time of mission, time of courage

Today is World Missionary Day, this year entitled “Missionary Church, witness of mercy”, a theme to which the Holy Father dedicated his reflection prior to today’s Angelus, recited with the faithful in St. Peter’s Square.

The Pope recalled that in the exhortation of St. Paul to Timothy the Apostle he meditated on his existence entirely dedicated to mission and, approaching the end of his earthly existence, he describes it with reference to three seasons: the present, the past and the future. In the present he speaks of his life as an offering or sacrifice; with reference to the past, he refers to the “good fight” and the “race” of a man consistent with his commitments and responsibilities; therefore, for the future he trusts in recognition from God, the “righteous judge”. However, he emphasises that his mission was effective, righteous and true thanks solely to his closeness to and the strength of the Lord, Who made of him a proclaimer of the Gospel to all peoples.

“In Paul, the Christian community encounters its model, in the conviction that it is the presence of the Lord that makes apostolic work and the task of evangelisation successful”, said the Pope. “The experience of the Apostle of the Gentiles reminds us that on the one hand, we must engage in pastoral and missionary activities as though the result depended on our efforts, with the spirit of sacrifice of an athlete who does not stop even when faced with defeat, and on the other, however, in the knowledge that the true success of our mission is a gift of grace: it is the Holy Spirit Who makes the Church’s mission in the world effective”.

“Today is a time of mission and a time of courage!” he exclaimed. “Courage to strengthen our faltering steps, to commit ourselves to the Gospel, to regain confidence in the strength that mission brings. It is a time of courage, even though having courage does not mean having a guarantee of success. We are required to have the courage to fight, not necessarily to win; to proclaim but not necessarily to convert. We are required to have the courage not to conform to the world, without however becoming polemical or aggressive. We are required to have the courage to be open to all, never to diminish the absolute and unique nature of Christ, sole Saviour of all. We are required to have the courage to resist incredulity without arrogance. We are also required to have the courage of the publican in the Gospel today, he who with humility did not dare even raise his eyes to heaven, but instead beat his breast, saying: ‘God, be merciful to me, a sinner’. Today is a time of courage! Today we need courage!”.

“May the Virgin Mary, model of the outbound Church and docile to the Holy Spirit, help us all to be, by virtue of

our baptism, missionary disciples who bring the message of salvation to the whole human family”, concluded the bishop of Rome.

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