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General Audience

This morning's general audience took place in Saint Peter's Square, but before proceeding to the square the Pope greeted the sick who, due to the heat, participated in the audience from the Paul VI Hall. The Holy Father continued his catechesis on the Acts of the Apostles, focusing on the theme: "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. The life of the early community, from the love of God to love for brothers" (Acts of the Apostles 2: 42, 44-45).

After the catechesis and the summary of his address in various languages, the Pope greeted in particular the groups of faithful present from all over the world. The general audience concluded with the recitation of the *Pater Noster* and the apostolic blessing.

Catechesis of the Holy Father

Dear brothers and sisters, good morning!

The fruit of Pentecost, the powerful effusion of the *Spirit of God on the first Christian community* was such that many people felt their heart pierced by the good news – the *kerygma* – of salvation in Christ, and followed Him freely, converting, receiving baptism in His name and receiving in turn the gift of the Holy Spirit. Around three thousand people joined that fraternity that is the habitat of believers and the ecclesial leaven of the work of evangelization. The warmth of the faith of these brothers and sisters in Christ makes their life the *scene of the work of God* which is made manifest in prodigies and signs through the Apostles. The extraordinary becomes ordinary and *daily life becomes the space of the manifestation of the living Christ*.

The evangelist Luke recounts this too us, showing us *the Church of Jerusalem as the paradigm of every Christian community*, as the icon of a fraternity that fascinates and must be neither mythologized nor minimized. The collection of the Acts enables us to look through the walls of the *domus* where the first Christians joined together as the *family of God*, the space of the *koinonia*, that is of the communion of love between brothers and sisters in Christ. One may see that they live in a very precise way: they "devoted themselves to the apostles'

teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer” (*Acts 2: 42*). The Christians listen attentively to the *didaché*, the apostolic teaching; they practice a high quality of interpersonal relationships also through the communion of spiritual and material goods; they make memorial of the Lord through the “*breaking of bread*”, that is, the Eucharist, and they dialogue with God in *prayer*. These are the attitudes of the Christian, the four traces of a good Christian.

Unlike in human society, where one tends to look after one’s own interests regardless of, or even at the expense of those of others, the fellowship of believers banishes individualism to favour sharing and solidarity. There is no place for selfishness in the soul of a Christian: if your heart is selfish, you are not Christian, you are worldly, if you seek only your favour, your profit. And Luke tells us that the believers stay together (see *Acts 2: 44*). Closeness and unity are the style of believers: close, concerned about the other, not to gossip about the other, no, to help, to be closer.

The grace of baptism thus reveals the intimate bond between brothers in Christ, who are called to *share*, to identify themselves with others and to give “to anyone who had need” (*Acts 2: 45*), that is, generosity, almsgiving, concern for the other, visiting the sick, visiting those who are in need, who need consolation.

And this fraternity, precisely because it chooses the path of communion and attention to those in need, this fraternity that is the Church can live a true and authentic liturgical life: Luke says: “Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts”, praising God and enjoying the favour of all the people” (*Acts 2: 46-47*).

Finally, the account of the Acts reminds us that the Lord guarantees the growth of the community (see *2:47*): the perseverance of believers in the genuine covenant with God and with brothers becomes an attractive force that fascinates and conquers many (see *Evangelii gaudium*, 14), a principle through which the fellowship of believers of every time lives.

We pray the Holy Spirit to make our communities places where we can welcome and practice the new life, the works of solidarity and communion, places where the liturgies are an encounter with God, which becomes communion with our brothers and sisters, places that are doors open to the heavenly Jerusalem.

Greeting in English

I welcome all the English-speaking pilgrims and visitors taking part in today’s Audience, especially those from England, Scotland, Wales, Australia, Japan, Guam and the United States of America. I greet in particular those taking part in the course on translating Latin liturgical texts sponsored by the Pontifical Atheneum of Sant’Anselmo. Upon all of you I invoke the joy and peace of our Lord Jesus Christ. God bless you!

At the end of the audience the Pope recalled that next Friday we will celebrate the Solemnity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. “I invite you all to look to this heart and to imitate its truest sentiments. Pray for all the priests and for my Petrine ministry, so that every pastoral action may be imprinted with the love that Christ has for every man.

The Pope’s greeting to the sick

Today you have come here because outside it is too hot, too hot... Here it is cooler and you can see the audience clearly on the screen. There will be two communities: the one in the square and you, together. You participate in the audience. They will certainly arrange you well to be able to see the screen. And now, I give you my blessing, to all of you.
