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Jubilee audience: the relationship between mercy and redemption

The relationship between mercy and redemption was the theme of the Holy Father's catechesis during this Saturday's Jubilee audience in St. Peter's Square. Close to the Pope on the podium was a stone statue of St. Agnes of Bohemia, a gift from the Czech Republic, brought by faithful of the country during their national pilgrimage for the Holy Year of Mercy.

The word redemption, that refers to the salvation that God procures for us through the blood of His Son Jesus, is little-used, Francis observed; yet it is fundamental to indicate the most radical freedom that God can realise for us, for all humanity, and for all creation. "It seems that man today no longer likes to think he has been freed and saved through God's intervention; he deludes himself that his freedom is a force for obtaining everything. But in reality this is not the case. How many illusions are sold on the pretext of freedom, and how many new forms of slavery are created in our times in the name of a false freedom! Many, many slaves. 'I do this because I want to, I take drugs because I like to, I am free'... They are slaves! They become slaves in the name of freedom. We have all seen people like this who end up on the ground. We need God to free us from every form of indifference, selfishness and self-sufficiency".

"By making Himself one of us, the Lord Jesus not only takes on the human condition, but also raises us up to the possibility of being Sons of God", he explained. "By His death and resurrection, Jesus Christ, the blameless Lamb, conquered death and sin to free us from their dominion. He is the Lamb that was sacrificed for us, so that we can receive a new life made up of forgiveness, love and joy. All that He assumed was also redeemed, freed and saved. Certainly, it is true that life puts us to the test, and at times we suffer for this. However, in these moments we are invited to turn our gaze to the crucified Jesus who suffers for us and with us, as sure proof that God does not abandon us. Let us never forget that in anguish and persecution, as in everyday sufferings, we are always freed by the merciful hand of God Who raises us up to Him and leads us to a new life".

"God's love is boundless", the Pope emphasised. "We can discover ever new signs that show His attention towards us and, above all, His wish to reach us and to await us. All our life, although marked by the fragility of sin, is placed under the gaze of God Who loves us. How many pages of the Sacred Scripture speak to us of God's presence, closeness and tenderness for every man, especially for the smallest, the poor and the troubled! The greater our need, the more His gaze upon us is filled with mercy. He feels compassion and pity towards us because He knows our weaknesses".

Francis concluded his catechesis by inviting the thousands of faithful in St. Peter's Square to "open up to the Lord, and receive His grace", as, along with the Pope, they repeated three times the invocation of Psalm 130: "For with the Lord there is steadfast love / and with Him is plentiful redemption".
