



SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE BOLLETTINO

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The Pope's words at the Angelus prayer

Before the Angelus

After the Angelus

At midday today, Third Sunday of Lent, 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 St. Peter's Square.

The following is the Pope's introduction to the Marian prayer:

Before the Angelus

Dear Brothers and Sisters, good morning!

The Gospel of this Sunday, the Third of Lent, presents to us Jesus' dialogue with the Samaritan woman (cf. John, 4:5-42). The encounter took place while Jesus was crossing Samaria, a region between Judea and Galilee, inhabited by people whom the Jews scorned, regarding them as schismatic and heretical. However it was this population that would be one of the first to follow the Apostles' Christian preaching. While the disciples go to the village to find something to eat, Jesus stays by the well and asks a woman, who had come there to draw water, for a drink. A dialogue began from this request. "How is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria?". Jesus answered: "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water", a water that slakes any thirst and becomes an inexhaustible wellspring in the heart of one who drinks it.

To go to the well to draw water is tiring and tedious; it would be good to have a gushing source at one's disposal! However, Jesus talks about a different water. When the woman realises that the man with whom she is speaking is a prophet, she tells Him about her life and asks religious questions. Her thirst for affection and a full life was

not slaked by the five husbands she had; on the contrary, she experienced disappointments and deceptions. Therefore she was struck by the great respect Jesus had for her, and when He speaks to her even of true faith as a relationship with God the Father "in spirit and in truth", then she intuits that the man could be the Messiah, and Jesus – in a very rare act – confirms this: "I who speak to you am He" (v. 26). He says that He is the Messiah to a woman who had had such a disordered life.

Dear brothers, the water that gives eternal life was effused in our hearts on the day of our Baptism; God transformed us and filled us with His grace. But it may be that we have forgotten this great gift, or reduced it to a simple date, and perhaps we go in search of "wells" whose waters do not slake our thirst. When we forget the true water, we go in search of wells that do not have clean waters. So this Gospel is precisely for us! Not just for the Samaritan woman, but also for us. Jesus speaks to us as He did to the Samaritan woman. Of course, we already know Him, but perhaps we have not yet encountered Him personally. We know who Jesus is, but perhaps we have not encountered him personally, speaking with Him, and we have not yet recognised Him as our Saviour. The season of Lent is a good opportunity to draw close to Him, to encounter Him in prayer in a heart to heart dialogue, speaking with Him, listening to Him; it is a good opportunity to see in His face also the face of a suffering brother or a sister. In this way we can renew in ourselves the grace of Baptism, slake our thirst at the wellspring of the Word of God and of His Holy Spirit; and so discover also the joy of becoming architects of reconciliation and instruments of peace in daily life.

May the Virgin Mary help us to draw constantly from the grace, from the water that gushes from the rock that is Christ the Saviour, so that we can profess our faith with conviction and proclaim with joy the wonders of the love of God, merciful and the source of every good.

After the Angelus

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I wish to assure my closeness to the dear population of Peru, harshly afflicted by devastating floods. I pray for the victims and for those involved in the aid efforts.

Yesterday, in Bolzano, Josef Mayr-Nusser was proclaimed Blessed. A father and exponent of Catholic Action, he died a martyr because he refused to follow Nazism out of fidelity to the Gospel. For his great moral and spiritual stature, he constitutes a model for the lay faithful, especially fathers, whom we celebrate today with great affection, although the liturgical feast of St. Joseph is celebrated tomorrow since today is Sunday. I greet the Italian faithful from Viterbo, Bolgare and San Benedetto Po, and students from Torchiarello.

I wish you all a good Sunday. Do not forget to pray for me. Have a good lunch, and goodbye!
