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**The Pope's words at the Angelus prayer**

**Before the Angelus**

**After the Angelus**

At midday today, fourth 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!

At the centre of the Gospel, this Fourth Sunday of Lent, are Jesus and a man blind from birth (John 9: 1-41). Christ restores his sight and works this miracle with a kind of symbolic ritual: first, He mixes the earth with saliva and rubs it on the blind man's eyes; He then orders him to go and wash himself in the Pool of Siloam. The man goes, washes, and regains his sight. With this miracle, Jesus reveals Himself as the light of the world; and the man blind from birth is each one of us, created to know God but, because of sin we are like the blind, and need a new light. We all need a new light, that of faith, that Jesus has given us. Indeed, the blind man of the Gospel, regaining his vision, opens up to the mystery of Christ. Jesus asks him, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" (v. 35). "Who is He, sir, that I may believe in Him?" replies the healed blind man (v. 36). "You have seen Him and the one speaking with you is He" (v. 37). He said, "I do believe, Lord," and he worshipped him.

This episode causes us to reflect on our faith, our faith in Christ, the Son of God, and at the same time, it also refers to Baptism, which is the first Sacrament of the faith, the Sacrament that makes us "come to the light" by rebirth from water and from the Holy Spirit; as with to the man born blind, who opened his eyes after being

washed in the Pool of Siloam. The man born blind and cured represents when we do not realize that Jesus is “the light of the world”, when we look elsewhere, when we prefer to rely on small lights, when we fumble in the dark. The fact that the blind man does not have a name helps us to see ourselves reflected, without our face and our name in his story. We too have been “enlightened” by Christ in Baptism, and so we are called to behave like children of light. This requires a radical change in mentality, an ability to judge men and things according to a new scale of values, which comes from God. The Sacrament of Baptism, in fact, demands a choice, firm and decisive, to live as children of light, and to walk in the light. If now I were to ask you, “Do you believe that Jesus is the Son of God? Do you believe He can change your heart? Do you believe that He can show you reality as He sees it, not as we see it? Do you believe that He is light, that He gives us the true light?” What would you reply? Each one of you, answer in your heart.

What does it mean to have the true light, to walk in the light? It means first of all abandon false “lights”: the cold and foolish light of prejudice against others, because prejudice distorts reality and burdens us with aversion towards those whom we judge without mercy and condemn without cause. This is everyday life! When we talk of others, we do not walk in the light, we walk in the shadows. Another false “light”, seductive and unclear, is self-interest: if we evaluate people and things based on the criterion of how useful they are to us, of our pleasure, of our prestige, we do not make truth in relationships and situations. If we walk this path of seeking only personal interest, we walk in the shadows ...

May the Blessed Virgin, who first welcomed Jesus, light of the world, grant us the grace to welcome again this Lent the light of faith, rediscovering the inestimable gift of Baptism, that we have all received. And may this new enlightenment transform us, in our attitudes and our actions, starting from our poverty, our littleness, to be bearers of a ray of Christ’s light.

### After the Angelus

Dear brothers and sisters,

Yesterday in Almería, Spain, José Álvarez-Benavides y de la Torre, and 114 companions, martyrs, were beatified. These priests, religious and lay people were heroic witnesses to Christ and His Gospel of peace and fraternal reconciliation. May their example and their intercession sustain the Church’s involvement in building the civilization of love.

I greet all of you from Rome, from Italy and from other countries, in particular the pilgrims from Córdoba, Spain, the youth of the Saint-Jean de Passy College in Paris, the faithful of Loreto, the faithful of Quartu Sant’Elena, Rende, Maiori, Poggiomarino and teenagers from the “Romana-Vittoria” deanery in Milan. And speaking of Milan, I would like to thank the Cardinal Archbishop and all the Milanese people for their warm welcome yesterday. I felt truly at home, with everyone, believers and non-believers. Thank you so much, dear Milanese, and I’ll tell you something: I found that it is true what they say: “In Milan, they welcome you with their heart in their hand”!

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