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The Pope's words at the Angelus prayer

Before the Angelus

After the Angelus

At midday today, 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!

Today the page from the Gospel (*Mt* 14: 22-33) describes the episode in which Jesus, after praying all night on the banks of the Sea of Galilee, goes towards his disciples' boat, walking on the water. The boat is in the middle of the lake, blocked by a strong counter wind. When they see Jesus coming towards them, walking on the water, the disciples mistake Him for a ghost and are afraid. But He reassures them: "Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid" (v. 27). Peter, with his typical impulsiveness, says to Him, "Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water", and Jesus calls to him, "Come" (v. 28-29). Peter gets out of the boat and starts to walk on the water towards Jesus, but due to the wind he becomes afraid and starts to sink. He shouts, "Lord, save me!", and Jesus reaches out His hand and takes hold of him (v. 30-31).

This Gospel account contains rich symbolism and makes us reflect on our faith, both as individuals and as an ecclesial community, and also the faith of all of us who are here today in the Square. The community, this ecclesial community, does it have faith? How is the faith in each one of us, and the faith of our community? The boat is the life of each one of us, but it is also the life of the Church; the counter wind represents difficulties and

trials. Peter's invocation: "Lord ... command me to come to you on the water", and his cry, "Lord, save me!" closely resemble our desire to feel the Lord's proximity, but also the fear and anguish that accompany the hardest moments of our life and that of our communities, marked by inner fragility and external difficulties.

For Peter, at that moment, the sure word of Jesus, which was like a rope he could hold onto to face the hostile and turbulent waters, was not enough. It is what can happen to us too. When we do not hold fast to the Word of the Lord, and in order to have more security we consult horoscopes and fortune-tellers, we begin to sink down. This means that the faith is not strong enough. Today's Gospel reminds us that faith in the Lord and in His Word do not open up to us a path where everything is easy and calm; it does not remove us from life's tempests. Faith gives us the security of a Presence, that is the presence of Jesus, which drives us to overcome existential storms, the certainty of a hand that holds onto us to help us face the difficulties, showing us the way even when it is dark. Faith, in summary, is not a shortcut from life's problems, but supports the path and gives it meaning.

This episode is a wonderful image of the reality of the Church in all times: a boat that, during the crossing, must also face counter winds and storms, that threaten to capsize her. What saves her is not the courage and the qualities of her men: the guarantee against shipwreck is faith in Christ and in His Word. This is the guarantee: faith in Christ and in His Word. On this boat we are safe, despite our sufferings and our weaknesses, especially when we kneel and adore the Lord, like the disciples who, at the end, "worshipped him, saying, 'Truly You are the Son of God'" (v. 33). How beautiful it is to say this word to Jesus: "Truly You are the Son of God!". Shall we say it together, all of us? "Truly You are the Son of God!".

May the Virgin Mary help us to hold steadfast in faith to weather the storms of life, to stay in the boat of the Church and to resist the temptation to climb into the bewitching but unsafe boats of ideologies, fashions and slogans.

After the Angelus

Dear brothers and sisters,

I greet you all with affection, all Romans and pilgrims present: families, parishes, associations and individual faithful.

Today too I have the joy of greeting some groups of young people: the scouts of Treviso and Vicenza, the participants in the national convention of Franciscan Youth. I also greet the Sisters of Mary Most Holy of Sorrows, Naples, and the group of pilgrims who have followed the Via Francigena on foot from Siena to Rome.

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