



SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE
BOLLETTINO

HOLY SEE PRESS OFFICE BUREAU DE PRESSE DU SAINT-SIÈGE PRESSEAMT DES HEILIGEN STUHLIS
OFICINA DE PRENSA DE LA SANTA SEDE SALA DE IMPRENSA DA SANTA SÉ
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N. 170903a

Sunday 03.09.2017

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's Gospel reading (cf *Mt* 16: 21-27) is the continuation of last Sunday's, which highlighted the profession of faith of Peter, the "rock" on which Jesus wishes to build His Church. Today, in striking contrast, Matthew shows us the reaction of Peter himself when Jesus reveals to the disciples that He must suffer in Jerusalem, will die, and will rise a gain (cf. v. 21). Peter takes Jesus aside and rebukes Him, as this, he says, cannot happen to Him, to Christ. However, Jesus in turn rebukes Peter with harsh words: "Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me. For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man" (v. 23). A moment before, the apostle was blessed by the Father, as he had received that revelation from Him; he was a solid "rock" on which Jesus could build His community, and immediately afterwards he became an obstacle, a rock not to build upon but a stumbling block on the road of the Messiah. Jesus is well aware that Peter and the others still have a long way to go to become His apostles!

At that point, the Master addresses all those who were following Him, presenting to them clearly the way to follow: "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me" (v. 24).

Always, even today, the temptation is that of wanting to follow a Christ without the cross, or indeed to teach God the right way, like Peter: “No, no Lord, this no, this will never happen”. But Jesus reminds us that His way is the way of love, and there is no true love without self-sacrifice. We are called not to let ourselves be absorbed by the vision of this world, but to be always more aware of the need and of the hardship for us as Christians to walk against the current, and uphill.

Jesus completes His proposal with words that express a great wisdom, always valid, as they challenge the selfish mentality and behaviour. He exhorts, “For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it” (v. 25). In this paradox there is the golden rule that God has inscribed in human nature created in Christ: the rule that only love gives meaning and happiness to life. To use one’s own talents, energies and time only to save, protect and fulfil oneself leads in reality to losing oneself, or rather, a sad and barren existence. If instead we live for the Lord and base our life on love, as Jesus did, we will be able to savour authentic joy, and our life will be fruitful, not barren.

In the celebration of the Eucharist we relive the mystery of the Cross; not only do we remember, but we carry out the memorial of the redeeming Sacrifice, in which the Son of God loses Himself entirely to receive Himself once more from the Father and in this way to find us again, we who were lost, along with all creatures. Every time we participate in Holy Mass, the love of Christ crucified and risen is communicated to us as food and drink, so that we can follow Him in the journey of every day, in concrete service to the faithful.

May Mary Most Holy, who followed Jesus unto Calvary, accompany us too, and help us not to fear the cross, but with Jesus nailed to it, not a cross without Jesus, the cross with Jesus, that is, the cross of suffering out of love for God and for our brothers, because this suffering, by Christ’s grace, is fruitful with resurrection.

After the Angelus

Dear brothers and sisters,

As I renew my spiritual closeness to the populations of southern Asia, who are still suffering the consequences of the floods, I wish to express my heartfelt participation in the suffering of the inhabitants of Texas, and Louisiana, affected by a hurricane and exceptional rains, which have claimed victims, displaced thousands, and caused enormous material damages. I ask that Mary Most Holy, Consoler of the afflicted, obtain from the Lord the grace of comfort for these sorely tried brothers of ours.

I greet all of you, dear pilgrims from Italy and from various countries. In particular, the pilgrims of the parishes of Sarmede, Anzano and Cappella Maggiore of the diocese of Vittorio Veneto; the faithful of the Canary Islands; the band from Pontevico, the recently confirmed from Mariano al Brembo, Padria and Prevalle; and young people from Chizzola, Cagliari and Bellagio. And I want to thank you, who have wished me a good trip. Thank you; thank you!

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