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BIURO PRASOWE STOLICY APOSTOLSKIEJ دار الصحافة التابعة للكرسي الرسولي

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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 we begin the journey of Advent, which will culminate in Christmas. Advent is the time that is given to us to welcome the Lord Who comes to meet us, also to verify our desire for God, to look ahead and prepare for the return of Christ. He will return to us on the feast of Christmas, when we will remember His historical coming in the humility of the human condition; but He comes within us every time We are willing to receive Him, and He will come again at the end of time to "judge the living and the dead". For this we must always be vigilant and wait for the Lord with the hope of meeting Him. Today's liturgy introduces us precisely to this evocative theme of vigilance and waiting.

In the Gospel (cf. *Mk* 13: 33-37) Jesus exhorts us to *pay attention* and to *watch*, to be ready to welcome Him at the moment of His return. He tells us: "Be on guard, keep awake. For you do not know when the time will come ... for you do not know when the master of the house will come ... lest he come suddenly and find you asleep" (v. 33-36).

The person who pays attention is the one who, in the noise of the world, does not let himself be overwhelmed by distraction or superficiality, but lives in a full and conscious way, concerned principally with others. With this attitude we become aware of the tears and the needs of others and we can also perceive their human and spiritual capacities and qualities. The attentive person then turns also to the world, trying to counter the indifference and cruelty present in it, and rejoicing in the treasures of beauty that also exist and must be kept. It is about having a look of understanding to recognize both the misery and poverty of individuals and of society, and to recognize the hidden wealth in the small everyday things, right there where the Lord has placed us.

The *vigilant person* is the one who accepts the invitation to watch, that is, not to be overtaken by the sleep of discouragement, the lack of hope, the disappointment; and at the same time rejects the temptation of the many vanities with which the world overflows and for which often personal and family time and serenity are sacrificed. It is the painful experience of the people of Israel, told by the prophet Isaiah: God seemed to have left His people wandering far from His ways (see 63: 17), but this was an effect of the infidelity of the people themselves (cf.). We too often find ourselves in this situation of infidelity to the Lord's call: He shows us the good way, the way of faith, the way of love, but we seek our happiness elsewhere.

Being alert and vigilant are the preconditions for not continuing to "wander far from the ways of the Lord", lost in our sins and in our infidelities; being attentive and vigilant are the preconditions for allowing God to find a way into our existence, restoring meaning and value to His presence full of goodness and tenderness. May Mary Most Holy, model in awaiting God and icon of vigilance, guide us to meet her son Jesus, reviving our love for Him.

After the Angelus

Dear brothers and sisters,

Last night I returned from my apostolic trip to Myanmar and Bangladesh. I thank all those who accompanied me with prayer, and I invite them to join in my giving of thanks to the Lord, Who allowed me to meet those populations, in particular the Catholic communities, and to be edified by their witness. I remain impressed by the memory of so many faces tried by life, but noble and smiling. I hold them all in my heart and in my prayer. Many thanks to the people of Myanmar and the people of Bangladesh!

In my prayer I also remember in a special way the people of Honduras, so that they may peacefully overcome the current moment of difficulty.

I address a greeting to you, Romans and pilgrims, present here. I greet in particular the faithful from Bratislava, Slovakia, and from Ludwigshafen in Germany.

I greet the group from Pregaziol, Treviso, and the young confirmands of Mestrino, Padua, as well as the Romanian community living in Italy who today celebrate the national feast day of Romania.

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