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## The Pope's words at the Angelus prayer

### Before the Angelus

### After the Angelus

At midday today, Fifth Sunday of Ordinary Time, 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 Saint Peter's Square.

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

### Before the Angelus

Dear brothers and sisters, good morning!

This Sunday's Gospel reading continues the description of Jesus' day in Capernaum, a Sabbath, the weekly feast day for the Jews (cf. *Mk* 1: 21-39). This time the evangelist Mark highlights the relationship between Jesus' *miraculous activity* and the *reawakening of faith* in the people He meets. Indeed, with the signs of healing that He accomplishes in the sick of every type, the Lord wishes to inspire faith as a response.

Jesus' day at Capernaum begins with the healing of Peter's mother-in-law and ends with the scene of the people of the whole town who mass in front of the house where He was lodging, to bring him all their sick. The crowd, marked by physical sufferings and spiritual miseries, constitutes, so to speak, the "vital environment" in which Jesus carries out His mission, made up of words and gestures that resonate and console. Jesus did not come to bring salvation in a laboratory; He did not give laboratory preaching, detached from the people: He is the midst of the crowd! In the midst of the people! Think that the greater part of Jesus' public life took place on the street, among the people, to preach the Gospel, to heal physical and spiritual wounds. It is a humanity riddled with suffering, this multitude, of which the Gospel speaks many times. It is a humanity riddled with sufferings,

hardships and problems: it is to this poor humanity that the powerful, liberating and renewing action of Jesus is directed. In this way, in the midst of the crowd until the late evening, that Sabbath ends. And what does Jesus do afterwards?

Before dawn the following day He goes out, unseen, by the city gate and retires to a secluded place to pray. Jesus prays. In this way He removes even His person and His mission from a triumphalist vision, which would misunderstand the meaning of the miracles and of His charismatic power. Indeed, the miracles are “signs”, which invite the response of faith; signs which are always accompanied by words, which illuminate them and, together, signs and words, provoke the faith and conversion by the divine strength of Christ’s grace.

The conclusion of today’s passage (v. 35-39) shows that the announcement of the Kingdom of God by Jesus finds its most proper place on the road. To the disciples who seek Him to bring Him back to the city – the disciples went to find Him where He was praying, and they wanted to bring him back to the city – what does Jesus answer? “Let us go on to the next towns, that I may preach there also, for that is why I came out” (v. 38). This was the journey of the Son of God and this will be the journey of His disciples. And it should be the journey of every Christian. The road, as the place for the glad proclamation of the Gospel, places the mission of the Church under the sign of “going forth”, of the journey, under the sign of “movement” and never static.

May the Virgin Mary help us be open to the voice of the Holy Spirit, Who drives the Church increasingly to pitch her tent in the midst of the people to bring to all the healing word of Jesus, doctor of bodies and souls.

### **After the Angelus**

Dear brothers and sisters,

Yesterday, in Vigevano, the young Teresia Olivelli, killed out of hatred of the Christian faith in 1945, was proclaimed Blessed. He bore witness to Christ in love for the weakest and joins the long line of martyrs of the last century. May his heroic sacrifice be a seed of hope and fraternity, especially for the young.

Today in Italy we celebrate the Day for Life, which has as its theme “The Gospel of life, joy for the world”. I join in the Message of the Bishops and express my appreciation and encouragement to the various ecclesial bodies that in many ways promote and support life, in particular the Movement for Life, whose members present here I greet; there are not many of them. And this worries me; that are not many who fight for life in a world where every day weapons are built, every day more laws against life are passed, every day this throwaway culture gains ground, this culture of discarding what is not useful, what is bothersome. Please, let us pray that our people may be more aware of the defence of life in this moment of destruction and of the discarding of humanity.

I wish to assure my closeness to the peoples of Madagascar, recently struck by a strong cyclone, which has claimed victims, displaced persons and caused enormous damage. May the Lord console and sustain them.

And now an announcement. Faced with the tragic continuation of conflict in several parts of the world, I invite all faithful to a special Day of prayer and fasting for peace on this coming 23 February, Friday of the First Week of Lent. We will offer this in particular to the populations of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and of South Sudan. As on other similar occasions, I also invite non-Catholic and non-Christian brothers and sisters to participate in this initiative in the ways they consider most appropriate, but all together.

Our heavenly Father always listens to His children who cry to Him in pain and in anguish; “He heals the brokenhearted and binds their wounds (*Psalms* 147, 3). I address a heartfelt appeal that we too hear this cry and, each person in his or her own conscience, before God, let us ask ourselves, “What can I do for peace?”. Certainly we can pray; but not only this: each person can say a concrete “no” to violence, as far as it depends on him or her. Because the victories obtained with violence are false victories: whereas working for peace is good

for all!

I greet you all, faithful of Rome and pilgrims from Italy and various countries. I greet the group from the dioceses of Cádiz and Ceuta, Spain; the alumni of the “Charles Péguy” College in Paris; the faithful of Sestri Levante, Empoli, Milan and Palermo; and the representation from the city of Agrigento, to whom I express my appreciation for their efforts in the reception and integration of immigrants. Thank you! Thank you for what you do. I address a cordial greeting to the volunteers and collaborators of the association “Fraterna Domus” which has worked for fifty years in Rome in acceptance and solidarity.

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

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