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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 Saint Peter's Square.

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

Before the Angelus

Dear brothers and sisters, good morning!

In these Sundays the Gospel, according to Mark's account, presents to us Jesus Who cures the sick of all kinds. World Day of the Sick is well placed in this context; it is observed today, 11 February, Memorial of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Lourdes. Therefore, with the heart looking towards the Grotto of Massabielle, we contemplate Jesus as a true doctor of bodies and souls, whom God the Father sent into the world to heal humanity, marked by sin and its consequences.

Today's Gospel reading (cf *Mk* 1: 40-45) presents to us the healing of a man who is sick with leprosy, a disease that in the Old Testament was considered a grave impurity and entailed the separation of lepers from the community: they lived alone. His condition was truly painful because the attitude of the time made him feel impure before God too, not only before men. Also before God. That is why the leper of the Gospel implores Jesus with these words: "If you will, you can make me clean!" (v. 40).

On hearing this, Jesus feels compassion (cf 41). It is very important to focus our attention on this inner

resonance of Jesus, as we did for a long time during the Jubilee of Mercy. One does not understand Christ's work, one does not understand Christ Himself, without entering His heart, full of compassion. This is what drives Him to reach out His hand to the man who is ill with leprosy, to touch him and to say to him: "I will; be clean!" (41). The most moving event is that Jesus touches the leper, since this was absolutely prohibited by the Mosaic Law. To touch a leper meant to be contaminated also within, in the spirit, namely, to become impure. However, in this case, the flow is not from the leper to Jesus, transmitting infection, but rather from Jesus to the leper, to purify him. In addition to compassion, in this healing, we also admire the boldness of Jesus, Who is worried by neither the infection nor the prescriptions, but is moved only by the will to free the man from the curse that oppresses him.

Brothers and sisters, no illness is the cause of impurity: sickness certainly involves the whole person, but in no way does it affect or impede his relationship with God. On the contrary, a sick person can even be more united to God. Instead, it is sin that makes us impure! Selfishness, pride, entering the world of corruption – these are sicknesses of the heart from which we need to be purified, turning to Jesus as the leper did: "If you will, you can make me clean!".

And now, let us be silent for a moment, and each one of us – all of you, me, all of us – can think about his heart, look inside himself, and see his own impurity, his own sins. And let each one of us, in silence, but with the voice of the heart, say to Jesus: "If you will, you can make me clean". Let us all do this, in silence.

"If you will, you can make me clean."

"If you will, you can make me clean."

And every time we approach the Sacrament of Reconciliation with a repentant heart, the Lord repeats also to us: "I will; be clean!" How much joy there is in this! So the leprosy of sin disappears, we return to live joyfully our filial relationship with God, and we are fully readmitted to the community.

Through the intercession of the Virgin Mary, our Immaculate Mother, let us ask the Lord, Who brought health to the sick, to heal also our interior wounds with His infinite mercy, thus restoring to us hope and peace of heart.

After the Angelus

Dear brothers and sisters,

From today, registrations are open for *World Youth Day*, which will take place in Panama in January 2019. I too, in the presence of two young people, will now register by internet.

[Clicks on the tablet]

Here we are, I have registered as a pilgrim to World Youth Day. We must get ready! I invite all young people around the world to live with faith and with enthusiasm this event of grace and fraternity, both by going to Panama, and by participating in their own communities.

On 15 February, in the Far East and in various parts of the world, millions of men and women will celebrate the *Lunar New Year*. I send my cordial greeting to all their families, with the hope that increasingly they will live in solidarity, fraternity and with the desire for good, contributing to the creation of a society in which every person is welcomed, protected, supported and integrated. I invite you to pray for the gift of peace, a precious treasure to be pursued with compassion, far-sightedness and courage. I accompany and bless you all.

I greet the families, the parishes, the associations and all those who have come from Italy and from many parts of the world, especially the pilgrims from Murcia, Spain, and the children of Guimarães, Portugal.

I greet the Congolese community of Rome and join in their prayer for peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. I recall that this intention will be particularly present in the Day of prayer and fasting that I have called for 23 February.

Today many Italian parishes are present, and many young people from after Confirmation, the profession of faith and catechism. It is not possible for me to name every group, but I thank you all for your presence and encourage you to walk with joy, with generosity, bearing witness everywhere to the goodness and the mercy of the Lord.

I address a particular thought to the sick who, in every part of the world, aside from the lack of good health, often suffer from loneliness and marginalization. May the Holy Virgin, *Salus infirmorum*, help everyone to find comfort in the body and in the spirit, thanks to suitable health care and fraternal charity which is able to become concrete and solidary care.

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