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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

At midday today, Solemnity of the Blessed Body and Blood of Christ, 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!

Today, in Italy and in other countries, the Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ, the *Corpus Domini*, is celebrated. The Gospel presents to us the episode of the miracle of the loaves (see *Lk* 9: 11-17), which takes place on the banks of the Sea of Galilee. Jesus is intent on speaking to the thousands of people, performing healings. At nightfall, the disciples come to the Lord and say to Him: "Send the crowd away so they can go to the surrounding villages and countryside and find food and lodging" (v. 12). The disciples too were tired. Indeed, they were in a remote place, and to buy food the people had to walk and go to the villages. And Jesus sees this and replies: "You give them something to eat" (v. 13). These words provoke astonishment in the disciples. They did not understand, perhaps they are also angry, and they answer: "We have only five loaves of bread and two fish—unless we go and buy food for all this crowd" (*ibid*).

Instead, Jesus invites His disciples to carry out a true conversion from the logic of "each one for himself" to that of sharing, starting from the little that Providence makes available to us. And immediately He shows that He is clear about what He wants to do. He says to them: "Have them sit down in groups of about fifty each" (v. 14). He then takes in His hands the five loaves and the two fishes, He addresses the Heavenly Father and He pronounces the prayer of blessing. Then, He starts to break the bread, to divide the fish, and to give it to the disciples, who distribute it to the crowd. And that food never runs out, until everyone has eaten enough.

This miracle – very important, so much so that it is described in all the Gospels – manifests the power of the Messiah and, at the same time, His compassion: Jesus has compassion for the people. That prodigious gesture not only remains as one of the great signs in the public life of Jesus, but anticipates what will be, in the end, the memorial of His sacrifice, the Eucharist, Sacrament of His Body and His Blood given for the salvation of the world.

The Eucharist is the synthesis of all Jesus' existence, which was a single act of love to the Father and to His brothers. Also there, as in the miracle of the multiplication of the loaves, Jesus took the bread in His hands, raised the prayer of blessing to the Father, broke the bread and gave it to the disciples; and He did the same with the chalice of wine. But in that moment, on the eve of His Passion, He wished to leave in that gesture the Testament of the new and eternal Covenant, the perpetual memorial of His Pasch of death and resurrection. The feast of *Corpus Domini* invites us, every year, to renew our wonder and joy for this wonderful gift of the Lord, which is the Eucharist. Let us receive it with gratitude, not in a passive, accustomed way. We must not get used to the Eucharist, and go to communion as a habit – no! Each time we go to the altar to receive the Eucharist, we must truly renew our “amen” to the Body of Christ. When the priest says “the Body of Christ”, we say “amen”: but may it be an “amen” that comes from the heart, convinced. It is Jesus, it is Jesus Who has saved me, it is Jesus Who comes to give me the strength to live. It is Jesus, the living Jesus. But we must not get used to this: each time as if it were the first Communion.

An expression of the Eucharistic faith of the holy people of God is given by the processions with the Blessed Sacrament, which in this Solemnity take place everywhere in the Catholic Church. This evening I too, in the Roman quarter of Casal Bertone, will celebrate Mass, which will be followed by the procession. I invite you all to participate, also spiritually, through radio and television. May Our Lady help us follow with faith and love Jesus Whom we adore in the Eucharist.

After the Angelus

Dear brothers and sisters,

Yesterday in Madrid, María Carmen Lacaba Andía and thirteen companions of the Franciscan Order of the Immaculate Conception were proclaimed Blessed. Killed in hatred of the faith during the religious persecution between 1936 and 1939, these cloistered nuns, like the prudent Virgins, awaited with heroic faith the arrival of the divine Spouse. Their martyrdom is an invitation to all of us to be strong and steadfast, especially at the time of trial. Let us salute these new Blesseds with an applause!

I greet you all, Romans and pilgrims. In particular, to those from Brazil, from the island of Guam, United States of America, and the pilgrimage from Liverpool promoted by the Sisters of Our Lady of Namur.

I greet the faithful of Salerno, Crotone and Lanciano.

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