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The Pope's words at the Angelus prayer

Today at midday, after Holy Mass for World Missionary Day, 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!

The second reading of today's liturgy offers us the exhortation that the Apostle Paul addresses to his faithful collaborator Timothy: "preach the word, be urgent in season and out of season, convince, rebuke and exhort, be unfailing in patience and in teaching" (2 *Tm* 4: 2). The tone is fervent: Timothy must feel he is in charge of proclaiming the Word.

World Missionary Day, which is being celebrated today, is a propitious occasion for every baptized person to be even more conscious of the need to cooperate in proclaiming the Word, in proclaiming the Kingdom of God with a renewed commitment. Pope Benedict XV, promulgated the Apostolic Letter *Maximum Illud* a hundred years ago, in order to give new impetus to the missionary responsibility of the entire Church. He cautioned about the need to evangelically re-qualify mission in the world, so that it would be cleansed of any colonial incrustation and freed from the conditioning of the expansionist policies of the European nations.

In today's changed context, the message of Benedict xv is still timely and spurs us to overcome the temptation of all forms of self-referential withdrawal and of all forms of pastoral pessimism, in order to open ourselves to the

joyful newness of the Gospel. In our time, marked by a globalization that should be supportive and respectful of the particularities of peoples, and instead still suffers from homogenization and from age-old conflicts for power that fuel wars and destroy the planet, believers are called to take everywhere, with renewed passion, the Good News that in Jesus, mercy conquers sin, hope conquers fear, fraternity conquers hostility. Christ is our peace and in him every division is overcome; in him alone lies the salvation of every man and every people.

To live the mission in full there is an indispensable condition: prayer, fervent and unceasing prayer, according to Jesus' teaching also proclaimed in today's Gospel, in which he recounted a parable on the need "always to pray and not lose heart" (*Lk* 18: 1). Prayer is the first support of the People of God for missionaries, rich in affection and gratitude for their difficult task of proclaiming and offering the light and grace of the Gospel to those who have not yet received it. It is also a fine occasion to ask ourselves today: do I pray for missionaries? Do I pray for those who go afar to bear the Word of God through witness? Let us think about this.

May Mary, Mother of all people, accompany and protect the missionaries of the Gospel each day.