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The Pope's words at the Angelus prayer

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 are the Pope's words of introduction to the Marian prayer:

Before the Angelus

Dear brothers and sisters, *buongiorno!*

Today the Gospel presents us the parable of the sower (cf. *Mt 13:1-23*). "Sowing" is a very beautiful image, and Jesus uses it to describe the gift of his Word. Let us imagine a seed: it is tiny, barely visible, but it makes plants grow that bear fruit. The Word of God is thus: think of the Gospel, a small book, simple and within reach of all, that produces new life in those who receive it. So, if the Word is the seed, we are the soil: we can receive it or not. But Jesus, the "good sower", *does not tire of sowing it generously*. He knows our terrain, he knows that the stones of our inconstancy and the thorns of our vices (cf. vv. 21-22) can suffocate the Word, yet he hopes, he always hopes that we can bear abundant fruit (cf. v. 8).

This is what the Lord does, and this is what we too are required to do: to *sow tirelessly*. But how can one do this, sow continually without tiring? Let us take a few examples.

Firstly parents, firstly parents: they sow goodness and faith in their children, and they are called to do so without being discouraged even if at times they seem not to understand or to appreciate their teachings, or if the mentality of the world is against them. The good seed remains, this is what counts, and it will take root in due time. But if, giving in to mistrust, they give up sowing and leave their children at the mercy of fashions and mobile phones, without dedicating time to them, without educating them, then the fertile soil will be filled with weeds. Parents, never tire to sow in your children!

Let us look, then, at the young: they too can sow the Gospel in the furrows of everyday life. For example, with prayer: it is a small seed that you cannot see, but with which you entrust everything you live to Jesus, and so he can make it ripen. But I am also thinking of the time to dedicate to others, to those most in need: it may seem wasted; instead, it is holy time, while the apparent satisfactions of consumerism and hedonism leave one empty-handed. And I think of study: it is true, it is tiring and not immediately satisfying, like sowing, but is essential to build a better future for all.

We have seen parents, we have seen the young; now let us look at the sowers of the Gospel, many good priests, religious and laypeople engaged in proclamation, who live and preach the Word of God often without immediate success. Let us never forget, when we proclaim the Word, that even where it seems that nothing is happening, in reality the Holy Spirit is at work, and the kingdom of God is already growing, through and beyond our efforts. Therefore, go ahead joyfully, dear brothers and sisters! Let us remember the people who placed the seed of the Word of God in our life: each one of us, think of "how my faith began". Perhaps it germinated years after we encountered their examples, but it happened thanks to them!

In the light of all this, we can ask ourselves: do I sow goodness? Do I only care about reaping for myself, or do I also sow for others? Do I sow some seeds of the Gospel in everyday life: study, work, free time? Do I get discouraged or, like Jesus, do I continue to sow, even if I do not see immediate results? May Mary, whom we venerate today as the Blessed Virgin of Mount Carmel, help us to be generous and joyful sowers of the Good News.

After the Angelus

Dear brothers and sisters,

I greet you all, Romans and pilgrims from various countries.

I greet the Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of the Apostles, gathered in Rome for their General Chapter.

I send my heartfelt greeting to the *Cenacolo* Community, which has been a place of hospitality and human promotion for forty years; I bless Mother Elvira, the bishop of Saluzzo, and all the fraternity and friends. What you do is good, and it is good that you exist! Thank you!

I want to recall that, eighty years ago, on 19 July 1943, some quarters of Rome, especially San Lorenzo, were bombed, and the Pope, the Venerable Pius XII, wanted to go among the devastated people. Unfortunately, today too these tragedies are repeated. How is this possible? Have we lost our memory? May the Lord have mercy on us and deliver the human family from the scourge of war. In particular, we pray for the dear Ukrainian people, who are suffering so much.

I wish to greet and thank all the parishes that are carrying out summer activities with children and young people – there is a very popular one in the Vatican too. Thank you to the priests, the sisters, the animators and the families! In this context, I extend my best wishes for the next edition of the Giffoni Film Festival, where the protagonists are young people and children.

I wish you all a good Sunday. Please, do not forget to pray for me: I do so for you. Enjoy your lunch, and *arrivederci*.
