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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 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, good morning!

The Gospel today recounts the vocation of the first disciples (cf. *Mk* 1:14-20). Calling others to join His mission is one of the first things Jesus does at the beginning of His public life: He approaches some young fishermen and invites them to follow Him to "become fishers of men" (v. 17). And this tells us something important: the Lord loves to involve us in His work of salvation, He wants us to be active with Him, He wants us to be responsible and protagonists. A Christian who is not active, who is not responsible in the work of proclaiming the Lord and who is not a protagonist of his faith is not Christian or, as my grandmother used to say, is a "rosewater" Christian.

In principle, God would not need us, but He does, despite the fact that it involves taking on many of our limitations: we are all limited, or rather sinners, and He takes this on. Look, for example, at how much patience He had with the disciples: often they did not understand His words (cf. *Lk* 9:51-56), at times they do not agree among themselves (cf. *Mk* 10:41), for a long time they are unable to accept some essential aspects of His preaching, such as service (cf. *Lk* 22:27). And yet Jesus chose them and continued to believe in them. This is important: the Lord chose us to be Christians. And we are sinners, we commit one after the other, but the Lord continues to believe in us. This is wonderful.

In effect, bringing God's salvation to everyone was for Jesus the greatest joy, His mission, the meaning of His existence (cf. *Jn* 6:38), or, as He says, his food (cf. *Jn* 4:34). And in every word and deed with which we join with

Him, in the beautiful adventure of giving love, light and joy multiply (cf. *Is* 9:2): not only *around* us, but also *in* us. To proclaim the Gospel, then, is not wasted time: it is being happier by helping others to be happy; it is to free ourselves by helping others to be free; it is becoming better by helping others to be better!

Let us ask ourselves then: do I pause every now and then to remember the joy that grew in me and around me when I welcomed the calling to know and bear witness to Jesus? And when I pray, do I thank the Lord for having called me to make others happy? Finally, do I wish to make someone savour, through my testimony and my joy, to make them savour how beautiful it is to love Jesus?

May the Virgin Mary help us to taste the joy of the Gospel.

After the Angelus

Dear brothers and sisters!

The coming months will lead us to the opening of the Holy Door, with which we will begin the Jubilee. I ask you to intensify your prayer to prepare us to live well this event of grace, and to experience the strength of God's hope. Therefore, today we begin the *Year of Prayer*, that is, a year dedicated to rediscovering the great value and absolute need for prayer in personal life, in the life of the Church, and in the world. We will also be helped by the resources that the Dicastery for Evangelization will make available.

In these days, let us pray especially for Christian unity, and let us never tire of invoking the Lord for peace in Ukraine, Israel and Palestine, and in many other parts of the world: it is always the weakest who suffer the lack of it. I am thinking of the little ones, of the many injured and killed children, of those deprived of affection, deprived of dreams and of a future. Let us feel the responsibility to pray and build peace for them!

I have learned with sorrow of the kidnapping, in Haiti, of a group of people, including six religious sisters: in my heartfelt plea for their release, I pray for social concord in the country, and I invite everyone to bring an end to the violence, which is causing a great deal of suffering to that dear population.

I greet all of you, from Rome, Italy and many parts of the world: in particular, the pilgrims from Poland, Albania, and Colombia; the students of the Pedro Mercedes Institute of Cuenca, Spain; American university students who are studying in Florence; the group of Quinceañeras from Panama; and priests and migrants from Ecuador, to whom I assure my prayer for peace in their country. I greet the faithful of Massafra and Perugia, the Italian Catholic Union of Teachers, Managers, Educators and Trainers; and the Agesci Scout Group from Palmi.

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