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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!*

The Gospel of today's Liturgy shows us Jesus on the move: indeed, He has just finished preaching and, after leaving the synagogue, He goes to Simon Peter's house, where He heals his mother-in-law; then, towards the evening, He goes out again towards the city gates, where He meets many sick and possessed people and heals them; the morning after, He gets up early and goes out to withdraw in prayer; and finally, He sets out again across Galilee (cf. *Mk* 1:29-39). Jesus on the move.

Let us look at this continual movement of Jesus, which tells us *something important about God* and, at the same time, challenges us with *some questions* on our faith.

Jesus goes towards wounded humanity and shows us the face of the Father. It may be that within us there is still the idea of a distant, cold God, indifferent to our fate. On the contrary, the Gospel lets us see that Jesus, after teaching in the synagogue, goes out, so that the Word He has preached may reach, touch and heal people. By doing this, He reveals to us that God is not a detached master who speaks to us from on high; on the contrary, He is a Father filled with love who makes Himself close to us, who visits our homes, who wants to save and liberate, heal from every ill of the body and spirit. God is always close to us. God's attitude can be expressed in three words: *closeness*, *compassion* and *tenderness*. God makes Himself close to accompany us, tenderly, and to forgive us. Do not forget this: *closeness*, *compassion* and *tenderness*. This is God's attitude.

Jesus' incessant walking challenges us. We might ask ourselves: have we discovered the face of God as the Father of mercy, or do we believe and proclaim a cold God, a distant God? Does faith instil in us the restlessness of journeying or is it an intimate consolation for us, that calms us? Do we pray just to feel at peace, or does the Word we listen to and preach make us go out, like Jesus, towards others, to spread God's consolation? It will be good for us to ask ourselves these questions.

Let us look, then, at Jesus' journeying and remind ourselves that our first spiritual task is this: to abandon the God we think we know, and to convert every day to the God Jesus presents to us in the Gospel, who is the Father of love and the Father of compassion. The Father who is close, compassionate and tender. And when we discover the true face of the Father, our faith matures: we no longer remain "sacristy Christians", or "parlour Christians", but rather we feel called to become bearers of God's hope and healing.

May Mary Most Holy, Woman on the way, help us to proclaim ourselves the witness of the Lord who is close, compassionate and tender.

### After the Angelus

Dear brothers and sisters!

This coming 10 February, in East Asia and various parts of the world, millions of families will celebrate the lunar new year. I send them my warm greeting, with the hope that this feast may be an opportunity to experience relationships of affection and gestures of care, which contribute to creating a society of solidarity and fraternity, where every person is recognized and welcomed in his or her inalienable dignity. As I invoke the Lord's blessing for everyone, I invite you to pray for peace, for which the world longs so much and which, today more than ever, is endangered in many places. It is not the responsibility of a few, but of the entire human family: let us all cooperate to build it with gestures of compassion and courage!

And let us continue to pray for the populations who suffer as a result of war, especially in Ukraine, Palestine and Israel.

Today, in Italy, we celebrate the *Day for Life*, on the theme "The strength of life surprises us". I join with the Italian bishops in hoping that ideological visions can be overcome so as to rediscover that every human life, even those most marked by limitations, has an immense value and is capable of giving something to others.

I greet the young people of many countries who have come for the *World Day for Prayer and Reflection against Human Trafficking*, which will be celebrated on 8 February, memorial of Saint Josephine Bakhita, the Sudanese religious sister who was enslaved as a child. Today too, many brothers and sisters are deceived with false promises and are then subjected to exploitation and abuse. Let us all join to counter the dramatic global phenomenon of human trafficking.

Let us also pray for those killed and injured in the devastating fires that have broken out in the centre of Chile.

And I greet all of you who have come to Rome, from Italy and many parts of the world. I greet in particular the consecrated men and women from over sixty countries who are participating in the meeting "Pilgrims of hope on the path to peace", organized by the Dicastery for the Institutes of Consecrated Life and the Societies of Apostolic Life. I greet the students from Badajoz, Spain, and those from the "Sévigné" Salesian School of Marseille, as well as the Polish faithful from Warsaw and other cities; and the groups from San Benedetto del Tronto, Ostra and Cingoli. And I can see the Japanese flags there! I greet the Japanese. And I can see Polish flags: I greet the Polish and all of you, and the young people of the *Immacolata* too.

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

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