

HOLY SEE PRESS OFFICE
OFICINA DE PRENSA DE LA SANTA SEDE



BUREAU DE PRESSE DU SAINT-SIEGE
PRESSEAMT DES HEILIGEN STUHLS

BOLLETTINO

SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE

N. 240211b

Sunday 11.02.2024

The Pope's words at the Angelus prayer

At midday today, the Holy Father 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's Gospel presents us with the healing of a leper (cf. *Mk* 1:40-45). To the sick man, who implores Him, Jesus answers: "I will; be clean!" (v. 41). He utters a very simple phrase, which He immediately puts into practice. Indeed, "immediately the leprosy left him, and he was made clean" (v. 42). This is Jesus' style with those who suffer: few words, and concrete deeds.

Many times, in the Gospel, we see Him behave in this way towards those who suffer: deaf mutes (cf. *Mk* 7:31-37), paralytics (cf. *Mk* 2:1-12), and many others in need (cf. *Mk* 5). He always does this: He speaks little and His words are followed promptly by actions: He bows, takes by the hand, and heals. He does not waste time with discourses or interrogations, much less in pietism or sentimentalism. Rather, He shows the delicate modesty of one who listens attentively and acts with solicitude, preferably without being conspicuous.

It is a wonderful way to love, and how it would do us good to imagine it and assimilate it! Let us also think of when it we happen to encounter people who act like this: sober in words, but generous in action; reluctant to show off but ready to make themselves useful; effective in helping because they are willing to listen. Friends to whom one can say: "Do you want to listen to me? Do you want to help me?", with the confidence of hearing them answer, almost with Jesus' words: "Yes, *I will*, I am here for you, to help you!". This concreteness is so much more important in a world such as our own, in which an evanescent virtuality of relationships seems to be gaining ground.

Let us listen instead to how the Word of God provokes us: "If a brother or sister is ill-clad and in lack of daily food, and one of you says to them, 'Go in peace, be warmed and filled', without giving them the things needed for the body, what does it profit?" (*James 2:15-16*). The Apostle James says this. Love needs tangibility, love needs presence, encounter, it needs to be given time and space: it cannot be reduced to beautiful words, to images on a screen, momentary selfies and hasty messages. They are useful tools that can help, but they are not enough for love; they cannot substitute real presence.

Let us ask ourselves today: do I know how to listen to people, am I ready to meet their requests? Or do I make excuses, procrastinate, hide behind abstract or useless words? In real terms, when was the last time I went to visit someone who was alone or sick – everyone can answer in their heart – or when was the last time I changed my plans to meet the needs of someone who asked me for help?

May Mary, solicitous in care, help us to be ready and tangible in love.

After the Angelus

Today, María Antonia de Paz y Figueroa was canonized: an Argentine saint. A round of applause for the new saint!

Today, on the memorial of the Blessed Virgin of Lourdes, we celebrate World Day of the Sick, which this year draws attention to the importance of *relationships* in sickness. The first thing we need when we are ill is the proximity of loved ones, of healthcare professionals and, in our heart, God's closeness. We are all required to be a neighbour to those who suffer, to visit the sick as Jesus teaches us in the Gospel. Therefore, today I wish to express my closeness, and that of the entire Church, to all those who are sick or frail. Let us not forget God's style: proximity, compassion and tenderness.

But on this Day, brothers and sisters, we cannot remain silent about the fact that there are many people today to whom the right to care, and thus the right to life, is denied! I am thinking of those who live in extreme poverty; but I am also thinking of those who live in war zones: fundamental human rights are violated there every day! It is intolerable. Let us pray for beleaguered Ukraine, for Palestine and Israel, let us pray for Myanmar and for all peoples who are tormented by war.

I greet you all, Romans and pilgrims from various countries. In particular, I greet the faithful of Moral de Calatrava and Burgos, Spain, those from Brasilia and Portugal; the Youth Choir and Orchestra of Mostar; the School of Vila Pouca de Aguiar, Portugal.

I greet the faithful of Enego and Rogno, volunteers from the Shrine of Sant'Anna of Vinadio, the Choir of Eraclèa and the Santa Paola Frassinetti Association of San Calogero. I greet the young people of Lodi, Petosino and Torri di Quartesòlo; confirmands from Malta, Lallio and Almenno San Salvatore; students of the "Sant'Ambrogio" Salesian Institute of Milan and the Children's Choir of Piovène Rocchette; as well as the "Radio Mater" group, on the occasion of their thirtieth anniversary.

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