



BOLLETTINO

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Angelus: the “No” of original sin and the “Yes” of the Virgin Mary

Today, 8 December, Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, the Holy Father prayed the Angelus at the window of his study with thousands of faithful and pilgrims gathered in St. Peter's Square. Before the Marian prayer, he commented on the readings of the day's liturgy, which presented crucial passages in the history of relations between man and God, and which lead us to the origin of good and evil.

The Book of Genesis shows the first 'no', the 'no' of the origins, the human 'no', when man preferred to look at himself rather than at his Creator; he wanted to do as he wished and chose to be self-sufficient. But in so doing, removing himself from communion with God, he in fact lost himself and began to be afraid, hiding himself and to accuse the one close to him. “Fear is always a symptom of a 'no' to God”, said Francis. “Accusing others instead of looking at oneself indicates that I am drifting away from God. This is what sin does. However, the Lord did not leave man at the mercy of his evil; He sought him immediately and asked him a question full of apprehension: ‘Where are you?’. As if He were saying: ‘Stop, think: where are you?’ It is the question of a father or a mother who seeks a lost son: ‘Where are you? In what situation have you ended up?’ God does this with great patience, narrowing the distance created at the origins”.

The second crucial passage, narrated today in the Gospel, is “when God comes to dwell among us, He makes Himself man like us. And this was possible through a great ‘yes’ – that of sin was a ‘no’; this is a ‘yes’, Mary's is a great ‘yes’ at the moment of the Annunciation. Because of this Yes, Jesus began His journey on the ways of humanity; He began it in Mary, spending the first months of His life in the womb of His Mother: He did not appear as an adult and strong, but followed the whole path of human life. He made Himself the same as us in everything, except one thing, that ‘no’ – except for sin. Therefore, He chose Mary, the only creature without sin, immaculate. With just one word in the Gospel, she is said to be ‘full of grace’, brimming with grace. It means that in her, full of grace from the beginning, there was no room for sin. And when we turn to her, we too recognise this beauty: we invoke her ‘full of grace’, without the shadow of evil.

Mary responds to God's proposal by saying, ‘Behold the handmaid of the Lord’. “She does not say: ‘Well, this time I will do God's will, I'll make myself available, then I'll see ...’”, observed the Pope. “No, hers is a full ‘yes’, total, for all her life, unconditional. And as the ‘no’ of the origins closed man's passage to God, so Mary's ‘yes’ opened the way to God among us. It is the most important ‘yes’ in history, the humble ‘yes’ that overturns the arrogant ‘no’ of the origins, the faithful ‘yes’ that cures disobedience; the willing ‘yes’ that overturns the egoism of

sin”.

“For every one of us, there is also a history of salvation made up of ‘yes’ and ‘no’ to God”, continued the Holy Father. “Sometimes, however, we are experts in the half-yes: we are good at feigning that we do not understand what God would like and what our conscience suggests to us. We are also astute, and in order not to say a true and proper ‘no’ to God, we say: ‘I’m sorry, I can’t’, ‘not today, but tomorrow’; ‘Tomorrow I’ll be better, tomorrow I’ll pray, I’ll do good, tomorrow’. And this astuteness distances us from the ‘yes’, it distances us from God and leads us to the ‘no’, to the ‘no’ of sin, to the ‘no’ of mediocrity. The famous ‘yes, but ...’; ‘yes, Lord, but ...’. But in doing so, we close the door to the good, and evil benefits from those ‘yeses’ that are missing. Inside each one of us there is a collection of these. If we think about it we will find so many missed ‘yeses’. Instead, every full ‘yes’ to God originates a new history: to say ‘yes’ to God is truly ‘original’; it is origin. It is not sin, which makes us old inside. Have you thought that sin makes us old inside? It makes us age rapidly! Every ‘yes’ to God originates histories of salvation for us and for others, like Mary with her own ‘yes’”.

“On this Advent journey, God wishes to visit us and He awaits our ‘yes’. Let us think: ‘Today, what ‘yes’ must I say to God? Let us think about it. It will do us good. And we will encounter the voice of the Lord within ... Who asks us something, to take a step forward. ‘I believe in You, I hope in You, I love You; may your good will be fulfilled in me’. This is a ‘yes’. With generosity and trust, like Mary, let each one of us say today this personal ‘yes’ to God”.
