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The Pope's words at the Angelus prayer

Before the Angelus

After the Angelus

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 St. Peter's Square.

The following is the Pope's introduction to the Marian prayer:

Before the Angelus

Dear brothers and sisters, good morning!

In today's Gospel reading, (cf. *Mt* 10: 26-33), the Lord Jesus, after calling and sending in mission His disciples, instructs them and prepares them to face the trials and persecutions that they will have to encounter. Going in mission is not tourism, and Jesus warns His disciples: "You will be handed over to be persecuted". Thus He exhorts them: "So do not be afraid of them, for there is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed, or hidden that will not be made known. What I tell you in the dark, speak in the daylight … Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul" (v. 26-28). They can kill only the body but they do not have the power to kill the soul; do not be afraid of them. Jesus' sending the disciples on mission does not guarantee them success, as it does not shelter them from failures and sufferings. They must take into account the possibility of rejection or of persecution. This is rather frightening, but it is the truth.

The disciple is called to conform his life to that of Christ, Who was persecuted by men, Who knew rejection, abandonment and death on the cross. A Christian mission in tranquillity does not exist! Difficulties and tribulations form part of the work of evangelization, and we are called to find in them the opportunity to confirm

the authenticity of our faith and of our relationship with Jesus. We must regard these difficulties as the possibility to be increasingly missionary and to grow in our trust of God, our Father, Who does not abandon His children in the hour of the storm. In the difficulties of Christian witness in the world, we are never forgotten, but always helped by the Father's loving concern. Therefore, in today's Gospel, on three occasions Jesus reassures the disciples saying: "Have no fear!"

In our days also, brothers and sisters, persecution against Christians is present. We pray for our brothers and sisters who are persecuted and we praise God because, despite this, they continue to witness their faith with courage and fidelity. May their example help us not hesitate in taking our position in favour of Christ, witnessing Him courageously in everyday situations, even in apparently tranquil contexts. In fact, a form of test could also be the absence of hostilities and tribulations. In addition to being "sheep in the midst of wolves," in our time also the Lord sends us as watchmen in the midst of people who do not want to be awakened from worldly torpor, who ignore the words of the Truth of the Gospel, constructing their own ephemeral truths. And if we move and live in these contexts and say the Words of the Gospel, this is bothersome and we will not be well regarded.

However, in all of this the Lord continues to say to us, as He said to the disciples of His time: "Have no fear!". Let us not forget this word: when we experience tribulation or persecution, something that makes us suffer, we must always listen to Jesus' voice in our heart: "Have no fear! Have no fear; go on! I am with you!". Have no fear of one who derides you and mistreats you; and have no fear of one who ignores or honours you in front of others but behind you goes against the Gospel. There are so many who smile in front of us but behind our backs combat the Gospel. We all know them. Jesus does not leave us alone because we are precious to him. This is why He does not leave us alone: every one of us is precious for Jesus, and He accompanies us.

May the Virgin Mary, model of humble and courageous adherence to the Word of God, help us to understand that, in witnessing the faith, what counts is not our successes but rather our fidelity, fidelity to Christ, recognizing in any circumstances, even the most problematic, the inestimable gift of being His missionary disciples.

After the Angelus

Dear brothers and sisters,

I express my closeness to the population of the Chinese village of Ximno, struck yesterday by a landslide caused by heavy rains. I pray for the deceased and the injured, and for those who have lost their homes. May God console the families and support the rescue workers. I am very close to you.

Today, in Vilnius, Lithuania, the bishop Teofilius Matulionis, killed in hatred of the faith in 1962 at the age of almost 90, was declared Blessed. Let us praise God for the witness of this strenuous defender of the faith and of the dignity of man. Let us greet him, and all the Lithuanian population, with applause.

I greet to all of you, Romans and pilgrims. In particular, I greet the major archbishop, the bishops, the priest and the faithful of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, as well as pilgrims from Belarus, who celebrate the 150th anniversary of the canonization of St. Josaphat. I join spiritually in the divine liturgy that you will shortly celebrate in St. Peter's Basilica, invoking from the Lord for each one of you the courage of Christian witness and the gift of peace for the dear Ukrainian land.

I greet altar boys from Komorov, Poland, and other Polish faithful, with a thought also for pilgrims from the Shrine of the Mother of God of Gietrzwald. I greet the Chilean faithful of Santiago del Cile, Rancagua and Copiapó, as well as those of Montpellier and Corsica. I greet confirmands from Tombolo and the pilgrimage of the Order of Minims of St. Francis of Paola.

I wish you all a good Sunday and please, do not forget to pray for me. Have a good lunch, and goodbye.