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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!

This Sunday's Gospel reading (*Mt 16: 13-20*) brings us a key passage in Jesus' journey with His disciples: the moment in which He wants to check the point their faith in Him has reached. First He wants to know what the people think of Him; and the people think that Jesus is a prophet, something that is true, but they do not grasp the essence of His person, they do not grasp the essence of His mission. Then, He poses to the disciples the question closest to His heart, that is, He asks them directly: "But who do you say that I am?" (v. 15). And with that "but", Jesus decisively separates the disciples from the mass, as if to say: but you, who are with me every day and know me up close, what else have you understood? The Master expects of His own a lofty answer, different to that of public opinion. And, indeed, it is precisely that sort of answer that springs from the heart of Simon Peter: "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (v. 16). Simon Peter finds on his lips words that are greater than him, words that do not come from his natural capacities. Perhaps he did not attend elementary schools, yet is capable of saying these words, stronger than him! But they are inspired by the heavenly Father (cf. v. 17), which shows to the first of the Twelve the true identity of Jesus: He is the Messiah, the Son sent from God to save humanity. And from this answer, Jesus understands that, thanks to the faith given by the Father, there is a solid foundation on which to build His community, His Church. Therefore He says to Simon, "You are

Peter – that is, rock – and on this rock I will build my Church” (v. 18).

Also with us, today, Jesus wants to continue to build His Church, this house with solid foundations but where cracks are not missing, and it continually needs to be repaired. Always. The Church always needs to be reformed, repaired. We certainly do not feel that we are rocks, but instead little stones. However, no little stone is useless; rather, in the hands of Jesus the smallest stone becomes precious, because He gathers it up, He looks at it with great tenderness, He works it with His Spirit, and He places it in the correct place, which He has always thought of and where it will be most useful to the entire construction. Each one of us is a little stone, but in Jesus’ hands we participate in the construction of the Church. And all of us, small though we are, are made “living stones”, because when Jesus takes His stone in hand, He makes it His, He makes it living, full of life, full of the life of the Holy Spirit, full of life of His love, and in this way we have a place and a mission in the Church: it is a community of life, made up of very many stones, all different, which form one edifice characterised by fraternity and communion.

In addition, today’s Gospel reminds us that Jesus also wanted for His Church a visible centre of communion in Peter – he too is not a great stone, he is a little stone, but taken by Jesus he becomes a centre of communion – in Peter and in those who would succeed him in the same primatial responsibility, who from the beginning were identified in the bishops of Rome, the city where Peter and Paul bore their witness of blood.

Let us entrust ourselves to Mary, Queen of the Apostles, Mother of the Church. She was in the cenacle, next to Peter, when the Spirit descended on the Apostles and inspired them to go forth, to announce to all that Jesus is the Lord. Today may our Mother support us and accompany us with her intercession, so that we fully realise that unity and that communion for which Christ and the Apostles prayed and gave their life.

After the Angelus

Dear brothers and sisters,

In recent days, severe floods have affected Bangladesh, Nepal and India. I express my closeness to the populations and pray for the victims and for those who suffer as a result of this disaster. Sad news has reached us regarding the persecution of the religious minority of our Rohingya brothers. I would like to express all my closeness to them, and let us all ask the Lord to save them and to inspire men and women of goodwill to help them, so that they may have their full rights. Let us also pray for our Rohingya brothers.

I greet you all, faithful of Rome and pilgrims from Italy and various countries: families, parish groups and associations.

In particular, I greet members of the Carmelite Third Order, the young people of Tombelle, diocese of Padua – but you are noisy! – who have recently received Confirmation; and the group from Lodivecchio: these are very good because they travelled on foot, in the form of a pilgrimage, the last part of the Via Francigena. May you be equally good in your life!

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