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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!

Today's Gospel reading (cf. *Mt* 23: 1.12) is set in the final days of Jesus' life, in Jerusalem: days charged with expectations and tensions. On the one hand, Jesus addresses *severe criticisms* to the scribes and the Pharisees, and on the other, He leaves important *instructions to Christians* of all times, including our own.

He says to the crowd: "The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses' seat, so do and observe whatever they tell you". This means that they have the authority to teach what is in conformity with God's Law. However, straight after, Jesus adds: "but not the works they do. For they preach, but do not practice" (v. 2-3). A frequent fault in those who have authority is to demand of others things, though right, that they however do not put into practice themselves. Jesus says: "They tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on people's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to move them with their finger" (v. 4). This attitude is a poor exercise of authority, which should instead take its first force precisely from good example, to help others practise what is right and dutiful, supporting them in the trials they encounter on the way of good. Authority is a help, but if it is exercised badly, it becomes oppressive, it does not allow people to grow, and it creates an atmosphere of distrust and

hostility.

Jesus openly denounces some negative forms of behaviour of the scribes and the Pharisees: “They love the place of honour at feasts and the best seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the marketplaces” (v. 6-7). This is a temptation that corresponds to the human arrogance that is it not always easy to defeat.

Jesus then gives *counsel to His disciples*: “But you are not to be called rabbi, for you have one teacher, and you are all brothers. ... Neither be called instructors, for you have one instructor, the Christ. The greatest among you shall be your servant” (v. 8-11).

We disciples of Christ must not seek out titles of honour, authority or supremacy, since between us there must be a fraternal attitude. We are all brothers, and we must not in any way overpower others. If we have received qualities from the heavenly Father, we must put them to the service of our brothers, and not exploit them for our own personal satisfaction. We must not consider ourselves superior to others: modesty is essential for an existence that wishes to conform to the teaching of Jesus, Who is meek and humble of heart.

May the Virgin Mary, “created beings all in lowliness surpassing, as in height above them all” (Dante, *Paradise*, XXXIII 2), help us, by her maternal intercession, to shun pride and vanity, and to be docile to the love that comes from God, for the service of our brothers and for their joy, which will be ours too.

After the Angelus

Dear brothers and sisters,

Today, in Indore, India, Rani Maria Vattalil was proclaimed blessed. A woman religious of the Congregation of the Franciscan Clarist Sisters, she was killed for her Christian faith in 1995. Sister Vattalil bore witness to Christ in love and in meekness, and joins the large rank of martyrs of our time. May her sacrifice be a seed of peace, especially in India.

I greet you all, Romans and pilgrims, in particular those from Gomel in Belarus, the members of the “Centro Académico Romano Fundación” of Madrid, the faithful of Valencia, Murcia and Torrente, Spain, and the women religious Irmãs da Divina Providência, who celebrate the 175 years of their Institute.

I greet the “I Minipolifonici” Youth Choir of Trento, the choirs of Candiana, Maser and Bagnoli di Sopra; the participants in the Festival of Religious Art and Music, from various countries; and the faithful of Altamura, of Guidonia and of the parish of San Luca in Rome.

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