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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, the Gospel (cf. *Mt* 25: 1-13) indicates to us the condition for entering into the Kingdom of Heaven, and it does so with the parable of the ten virgins: these are those maidens with the task of welcoming and accompanying the bridegroom to the wedding ceremony, and since in that time it was the custom to celebrate marriage at night, the maidens held lamps.

The parable says that five of these virgins were wise, and five were foolish: indeed, the wise ones brought with them oil for the lamps, whereas the foolish did not. The bridegroom arrived late and they all fell asleep. At midnight the bridegroom's arrival was announced, and at this point the foolish virgins realized they did not have oil for the lamps, and asked the wise ones for it. But the latter answered that they could not spare it, as they did not have enough for all. While the foolish were in search of oil, the bridegroom arrived; the wise virgins entered with him in the banquet hall and the door was closed. The five foolish ones arrived too late, and knocked on the door, but the answer was, "I do not know you" (v. 12), and they remained outside.

That does Jesus want to teach us with this parable? He reminds us that we must be ready for the encounter with Him. Very often, in the Gospel, Jesus exhorts us to be vigilant, and He does so at the end of this account too. He says, "Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour" (v. 13). But with this parable He says that to be watchful does not mean simply not sleeping, but *being prepared*; indeed, all the virgins slept before the bridegroom arrived, but upon reawakening some are ready and others not. Here, therefore, is the meaning of being wise and prudent: it means not waiting for the last moment of our life to collaborate with the grace of God, but to do so already from now on. It would be good to think a little: one day will be the last one. If it were today, how prepared am I? But I must do this, or that... Preparing oneself as if it were the last day, this does us good.

The lamp is the symbol of the faith that illuminates our life, while the oil is the symbol of the charity that nourishes, that makes fruitful and credible the light of faith. The condition for being ready for the encounter with the Lord is not only faith, but a Christian life rich in love and charity for our neighbour. If we let ourselves be guided by what seems easiest to us, by the pursuit of our own interests, our life becomes sterile, incapable of giving life to others, and we do not accumulate any spare oil for the light of our faith; and this – faith – will be extinguished at the moment of the coming of the Lord, or even before. If instead we are watchful and seek to do good, with gestures of love, of sharing, of service to our neighbour in difficulty, we can remain at peace as we await the coming of the bridegroom: the Lord will be able to come at any moment, and even the sleep of death does not make us afraid, as we have a reserve of oil, accumulated with the good works of every day. Faith inspires charity and charity safeguards faith.

May the Virgin Mary help us make our faith ever more operative through charity, so that our lamp may shine already here, on our earthly journey, and then in heaven, at the wedding feast in paradise.

After the Angelus

Dear brothers and sisters,

Yesterday, in Madrid, Vicente Queralt Lloret and 20 companion martyrs, and José María Fernández Sanchez and 38 companion martyrs, were proclaimed blessed. Some of the new Blesseds were members of the *Congregation of the Mission*: priests, coadjutor brothers, novices; others were laypeople belonging to the *Association of the Miraculous Medallion*. They were all killed in hatred of the faith during the religious persecution that took place during the Spanish Civil War between 1936 and 1937.

I greet you all, families, parishes, associations and individual faithful, who have come from Italy and from many places in the world. In particular, I greet the pilgrims from Washington, Philadelphia, Brooklyn and New York, the Saint Mary Magdalene parish choir of Nuragus, Sardinia; the faithful of Tuscania, Ercolano and Venice; the Bowling Society of Rosta and confirmands of Galzignano. I wish you all a good Sunday. Please, do not forget to pray for me. Have a good lunch, and goodbye.
