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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 this last Sunday of the liturgical year we celebrate the Solemnity of Christ King of the Universe. His is a royalty of guidance, of service, and also a royalty that at the end of times will be affirmed as a judgement. Today we have before us Christ as king, pastor and judge, Who shows the criteria of belonging to the Kingdom of God. Here there are the criteria.

The Gospel passage opens with a grandiose vision. Jesus, addressing His disciples, says: "When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne" (Mt 25: 31). It is the solemn introduction to the account of the universal judgement. After living His earthly existence in humility and poverty, Jesus now presents Himself in the divine glory that belongs to Him, surrounded by an array of angels. The whole of humanity is convoked before Him, and He exercises His authority, separating one from the other, as a shepherd separates sheep from goats.

To those placed at His right, He says, "Come, O blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you

from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me" (v. 34-36). The righteous are surprised, as they do not recall having met Jesus, and less so having helped Him in that way; but He declares, "As you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me" (v. 40). This word never ceases to strike us, because it shows how far God's love arrives: to the point of identifying with us, but not when we are well, when we are healthy and happy, but when we are in need. And in this hidden way He lets Himself be encountered, He reaches His hand to us like a beggar. In this way Jesus reveals the decisive criterion of His judgement, namely concrete love for our neighbour in difficulty. And in this way the power of love is revealed, the royalty of God: in solidarity with those who suffer to inspire everywhere attitudes and works of mercy.

The parable of the judgement continues, presenting the King Who sends away from Him those who during their life did not concern themselves with the needs of their brothers. Also in this case they are surprised, and ask: "Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to you?" (v. 44). They imply, "If we had seen you, we would certainly have helped you!". But the King answers: "Truly, I say to you, as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me" (v. 45). At the end of our life we will be judged on love, that is, our concrete efforts in loving and serving Jesus in the smallest and most needy of our brothers. That beggar, that person in need who reaches out his hand is Jesus; that sick person I must visit is Jesus; that prisoner is Jesus; that hungry person is Jesus. Let us think of this.

Jesus will come at the end of times to judge all nations, but He comes to us every day, in many ways, and asks us to welcome Him. May the Virgin Mary help us to encounter Him and receive Him in His Word and in the Eucharist, and at the same time in the brothers and sisters who suffer from hunger, sickness, oppression and injustice. May our hearts *welcome Him in the today* of our life, so that we may be *received by Him in the eternity* of His Kingdom of light and of peace.

After the Angelus

Dear brothers and sisters,

We have been greatly pained by the news, last Friday, of the massacre in a mosque in the north of Sinai, in Egypt. I continue to pray for the many victims, for the wounded and for all that community, so hard hit. May God free us of these tragedies and sustain the efforts of all those who work for peace, harmony and co-existence. Those people were praying in that moment; let us too, in silence, pray for them.

Yesterday, in Córdoba in Argentina, Mother Catalina de María Rodríguez was proclaimed Blessed. The founder of the Congregation of the Hermanas Esclavas del Corazón de Jesús, the first female religious institute of apostolic life in Argentina, Catalina was first married, then as a widow, she consecrated herself to God and devoted herself to the spiritual and material care of the poorest and most vulnerable women. Let us praise the Lord for this woman, "impassioned by the Heart of Jesus and by humanity".

I greet all pilgrims, from Italy and from various countries: families, parish groups, and associations. In particular, I greet the Ukrainian community who remember the tragedy of the *Holodomor*, the famine provoked by the Stalinist regime which claimed millions of victims. I pray for Ukraine, so that the strength of faith may contribute to the healing of the wounds of the past and promote new paths of peace today.

I greet the faithful of Cagliari, Matera, Potenza, Parma, Crotone and Rossano, as well as the Italian Association of travelling companions to Marian shrines throughout the world.

This evening I will begin my apostolic trip in Myanmar and Bangladesh. I ask you to accompany me with prayer, so that may presence may be for those populations a sign of closeness and hope.

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