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The Pope's words at the Angelus prayer

Before the Angelus

After the Angelus

Following the celebration of Holy Mass in the Vatican Basilica on the Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord, at midday 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 Saint Peter's Square.

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

Before the Angelus

Dear brothers and sisters, and happy feast day!

Today, the Feast of the Epiphany of the Lord, the Gospel presents three attitudes with which the coming of Christ Jesus and His manifestation to the world were received. The first attitude: *careful searching*; the second: *indifference*; the third: *fear*.

Careful searching: the Magi do not hesitate to set out to search for the Messiah. When they reach Jerusalem they ask: "Where is the infant king of the Jews? We saw His star as it rose and have come to do Him homage". They have made a long journey and now they conduct a careful search to discover where the newborn King can be found. In Jerusalem they turn to King Herod, who asks the chief priests and scribes to inquire about the place where the Messiah was to be born.

This *careful* search of the Magi contrasts with the second attitude: the *indifference* of the high priests and scribes. They felt very comfortable. They know the Scriptures and are able to give the right answer regarding the

place of His birth: “In Bethlehem of Judea, because this is what the prophet wrote” (v. 5); they know, but they do not bother to go and visit the Messiah. And Bethlehem is only a few kilometres away, but they do not move.

Even more negative is the third attitude, that of Herod: he is *afraid* that the Child will take away his power. He calls the Magi and has them tell him when the star appeared to them, then he sends them to Bethlehem saying: “Go and find out all about the child and, when you have found Him, let me know, so that I too may go and do Him homage” (v. 7-8). In reality, Herod did not want to go and adore Jesus; Herod wants to know where the child is, not to pay Him homage, but to eliminate him, because he considers Him a rival. See how fear provokes hypocrisy. Hypocrites are the way they are because they have fear in their hearts.

These are the three attitudes we find in the Gospel: *the careful searching of the Magi, the indifference of the high priests, the scribes, those who knew theology; and the fear of Herod*. And we too must choose which of the three to adopt. Do I want to go thoughtfully to Jesus? “But Jesus doesn’t say anything to me ... I am fine”. Or am I afraid of Jesus, and in my heart do I want to do away with Him?

Selfishness can lead us to consider the coming of Jesus in our lives as a threat. So we try to suppress or silence Jesus’ message. When we follow human ambitions, the most comfortable perspectives, the inclinations of evil, we perceive Jesus as an obstacle.

On the other hand, the temptation of indifference is always present. Even if we know that Jesus is the Saviour – ours, everyone’s – we prefer to live as if He were not: instead of behaving coherently with our Christian faith, we follow the rules of the world, which tend to satisfy our inclination to arrogance, our thirst for power, for money.

Instead, we are called to follow the example of the Magi: to be careful in our search, ready to go out of our way to meet Jesus in our lives. Search for him in order to worship him, to recognize that He is our Lord, the One who indicates the true way to follow. If we have this attitude, Jesus really saves us, and we can live a beautiful life, we can grow in faith, hope and love for God and our brothers and sisters.

We invoke the intercession of Mary Most Holy, the star of pilgrim humanity in time. With her maternal help, may every person find Christ, the Light of Truth, and may the world go forward along the path of justice and peace.

After the Angelus

Dear brothers and sisters,

Some Eastern Churches, Catholic and Orthodox, celebrate *Christmas* at this time. I extend my best wishes to all these Churches: may this joyful celebration be a source of new spiritual vigour and communion among all of us Christians, who recognize Him as our Lord and Saviour. I would like to express, in a special way, my closeness to Coptic Orthodox Christians, and I warmly greet the Orthodox Copts and my Brother Tawadros whom I congratulate on the joyous occasion of the inauguration of the new Cathedral in Cairo.

The Epiphany also marks *Youth Mission Day*, which this year invites young missionaries to make the gaze of Jesus their own, so that it may guide their commitment to prayer, fraternity and sharing with their peers who are in need.

I extend my cordial greeting to you all, individual pilgrims, families, parish groups and associations, from Italy and different countries. In particular, I greet the faithful of Lavello and those of San Martino in Rio, the Sisters of St. Joseph of the Apparition, and the confirmands from Bonate Sotto and Romano di Lombardia.

A special greeting goes to those participating in the historical-folkloric procession promoting the values of the

Epiphany and which this year is dedicated to the territory of the Monti Prenestini. I would also like to mention the procession of the Magi that takes place in many places in Poland and which involves the widespread participation of families and associations.

I wish you all a happy feast-day. Please do not forget to pray for me. Enjoy your lunch and goodbye!
