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Apostolic Trip of the Holy Father Francis to Chile and Peru (15-22 January 2018) – Angelus Prayer in Plaza de Armas in Lima

Angelus Prayer in Plaza de Armas in Lima

At 11.45 local time (17.45 in Rome), the Holy Father Francis led the recital of the Angelus prayer in Plaza de Armas, Lima.

At the end, the Pope posed for a group photograph with the bishops. He then returned by popemobile to the apostolic nunciature, where he lunched with members of the papal entourage.

The following are the words pronounced by the Holy Father before reciting the Angelus prayer:

Address of the Holy Father

Dear young people, I am pleased to be here with you. These meetings are very important for me, especially in this year of preparation for the Synod on young people. Your faces, your questions and your lives are important for the Church and we need to give them the importance they deserve. We must also have the courage of the many young people of this land who were not afraid to love and risk their lives for Jesus.

Dear friends, how many examples you have! I think of Saint Martin de Porres. Nothing prevented that young man from achieving his dreams, nothing prevented him from spending his life for others, nothing prevented him from loving, and he did so because he had realized that the Lord loved him first. Just as he was: a *mulato*. He had to face many hardships. In the eyes of others, even his friends, it seemed that he had everything to lose, but he knew how to do one thing that would be the secret of his life: he knew how to trust. To trust in the Lord Who loved him. Do you know why? Because the Lord had trusted him first; just as he trusts each of you and will never tire of trusting you. To each of us the Lord has entrusted something and the response is to trust in Him. Each of you reflect in your heart: “What has the Lord entrusted me with?” Let everyone reflect: “What is it in my heart that the Lord has entrusted me with?”

You may say that sometimes this is very difficult. I understand that. In those moments, we can think negative thoughts, we can feel overwhelmed by different situations, and it can seem that we are “thrown out of the world-cup”, while they have the upper hand. But it’s not like that, even in the moments in which we’re thrown out, carry on trusting.

There are moments when you can feel powerless to achieve your desires and dreams. We all experience situations like that. In these moments when our faith seems to fade, remember that Jesus is by your side. Do not give up! Do not lose hope! Remember the saints who accompany us from heaven. Go to them, pray and never tire of asking for their intercession. Not only the saints of the past, but also those of the present: this land has many of them, because it is a land of saints. Peru is a land of saints. Ask for help and advice from people you know can give good advice because their faces radiate joy and peace. Let them accompany you as you journey along the path of life.

But there is something else, Jesus wants to see you on the move. He wants to see you achieve your ideals and to be enthusiastic in following His instructions. He will take you along the path of the beatitudes, a path that is not easy but exciting, a path that cannot be travelled alone, it has to be travelled as a team, where each member offers the best of his or her self. Jesus is counting on you as He counted long ago on Saint Rose of Lima, Saint Turibius, Saint Juan Macías, Saint Francisco Solano and so many others. And today He asks if, like them, you are ready to follow Him [They reply: “Yes”]. Today, tomorrow, will you be willing to follow Him? [They reply: “Yes”]. And within a week? [“Yes”]. Don’t be overly confident. If you are inclined to follow Him, ask Him to prepare your heart in order to be willing to follow Him. Clear?

Dear friends, the Lord looks on you with hope. He never grows discouraged with us. We sometimes become discouraged with a friend because we thought he or she was good but then we saw something which was not so good and we became discouraged and abandoned that person. Jesus is never discouraged, never: “Father, but if you knew the things I do, I say something but I do another, my life is not completely clean”. This being so, Jesus does not become discouraged about you. And now let us have a little silence. Each of you look into your heart to see how your life is, you will see that there are moments with good things and there are moments with things that are not so good. This being so, Jesus is not discouraged about you. And from your heart tell Him: “Thank you Jesus, thank you because you came to accompany me when I was still in bad things, thank you Jesus”. Let us all tell Him: “Thank you Jesus” [They all repeat this].

I know that we all like to see digitally enhanced photographs, but that only works for pictures; we cannot “photoshop” others, the world, or ourselves. Colour filtering and high definition only function well in video; we can never apply them to our friends. There are pictures that are very nice, but completely fake. Let me assure you that the heart can’t be “photoshopped”, because that’s where authentic love and genuine happiness have to be found and that’s where you show Him who you are: how is your heart?

Jesus does not want you to have a “cosmetic” heart. He loves you as you are, and He has a dream for every one of you. Do not forget, he does not get discouraged with us. But if you get discouraged, I invite you to take a look at the Bible and remember the kind of friends Jesus chose.

Moses, he was not articulate; Abraham, an old man; Jeremiah, very young; Zacchaeus, a short man; the disciples, who fell asleep when Jesus told them they should pray; Mary Magdalene, a public sinner, Paul, a persecutor of Christians; Peter, who denied Him, and was then made Pope, yet he denied Jesus... and we could go on with the list. Jesus wants us as we are, just as He wanted His friends, with their defects, desiring to correct them yes, but as they were, that’s how the Lord loves you. Don’t put on any make-up, don’t put any make-up on the heart, but show yourself to Jesus as you are so that He can help you to move forwards in life.

When Jesus looks at us, He does not think about how perfect we are, but about all the love we have in our hearts to give Him and to follow Him. That is the important thing for Him, that is the greatest thing, “how much love do I have in my heart?” And the response I want it to be also directed to our Mother: “Mother, beloved Blessed Virgin, look at the love I have in my heart, is it little? Is it much? I do not know if it is love”.

Be assured that she will accompany you at every moment of your life, at all the crossroads of your journey, especially at those times when you have to make important decisions. Do not become discouraged, move forwards, all together, because life is worth living with our heads held high. May God bless you.

We are in the Plaza Mayor of Lima, a small place in a relatively small city of the world, but the world is much bigger and full of cities and peoples, and is also full of problems, full of wars. Today I have heard very concerning news coming from the Democratic Republic of Congo; let us think of that country. In these moments, from this Plaza and with all those young people, I ask the authorities, those responsible and everyone within that beloved nation, to make the greatest commitment and effort to avoid every form of violence and to find solutions that favour the common good. Altogether, in silence, let us pray for this intention for our brothers and sisters of the Democratic Republic of Congo.

[Angelus Prayer and Apostolic Blessing]

Goodbye!
