



SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE
BOLLETTINO

HOLY SEE PRESS OFFICE BUREAU DE PRESSE DU SAINT-SIÈGE PRESSEAMT DES HEILIGEN STUHLS
OFICINA DE PRENSA DE LA SANTA SEDE SALA DE IMPRENSA DA SANTA SÉ
BIURO PRASOWE STOLICY APOSTOLSKIEJ دار الصحافة التابعة للكرسي الرسولي

N. 180318a

Sunday 18.03.2018

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 Saint 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 (cf. *Jn* 12: 20-33) recounts an episode that happened in the last days of Jesus' life. The scene takes place in Jerusalem, where He was for the feast of the Jewish Passover. Some Greeks also arrived for the ritual celebration; they were men inspired by religious sentiments, attracted by the faith of the Jewish people and who, having heard talk of this great prophet, approached Philip, one of the twelve Apostles, and said to him: "We wish to see Jesus" (v. 21). John highlights this phrase, which centres around the verb to see, which in the vocabulary of the evangelist means to go beyond the appearances to *grasp the mystery of a person*. The verb that John uses, "to see," is to reach the heart, to arrive by sight, with understanding, into the depth of the person, within the person.

Jesus' reaction is surprising. He does not answer with a "yes" or a "no," but He says: "The hour has come for the Son of man to be glorified" (v. 23). These words, which seem at first sight to ignore the question of those Greeks, in reality give the true answer, because one who wishes to know Jesus must *look within to the cross*, where His glory is revealed. To look *within* to the cross. Today's Gospel invites us to turn our gaze to the crucifix,

which is not an ornamental object or a fashion accessory – at times abused! – but is a religious sign to contemplate and understand. In the image of Jesus crucified there is unveiled the mystery of the Death of the Son of God as supreme act of love, source of life and of salvation for humanity of all times. In His wounds we have been healed.

I may think: “How do I look at the crucifix? As a work of art, to see if it is beautiful or not beautiful? Or do I look inside, and enter in Jesus’ wounds to His heart? Do I look at the mystery of God annihilated, unto death, as a slave, as a criminal?” Do not forget this: look at the crucifix, but to look within it. There is this beautiful devotion to pray an Our Father for each one of the five wounds: when we pray that Our Father, we seek to enter through Jesus’ wounds inside, inside, right to His heart. And there we will learn the great wisdom of Christ’s mystery, the great wisdom of the cross.

And to explain the meaning of His Death and Resurrection, Jesus uses an image and says: “unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit” (v. 24). He wants to make it understood that His supreme event – namely the cross, Death, and Resurrection – is an act of fruitfulness – His wounds have healed us – a fecundity that will bear fruit for many. He thus compares Himself to the grain of wheat that, decaying in the earth, generates new life. With the Incarnation, Jesus came to earth, but this is not enough. He must also die to redeem men from the slavery of sin and to give them a new life reconciled in love. I said: “to redeem men”, but to redeem me, you, all of us, each one of us, He paid that price. This is the mystery of Christ. Go towards His wounds, enter, contemplate; see Jesus, but from the inside.

And this dynamism of the grain of wheat, fulfilled in Jesus, must be realized also in us, His disciples: we are called to make our own the *paschal law* of losing our life to receive it, new and eternal. And what does it mean *to lose life*? That is, what does it mean to be the grain of wheat? It means to think less of ourselves, of our personal interests, and to be able to “see” and attempt to meet the needs of our neighbour, especially the least of them. To carry out with joy works of charity for all those who suffer in body and mind is the most genuine way to live the Gospel; it is the necessary foundation to enable our communities to grow in fraternity and mutual acceptance. I want to see Jesus, but to see Him from inside. Enter in His wounds and contemplate that love of His heart for you, for you, for you, for me, for everyone.

May the Virgin Mary, who always kept the gaze of her heart fixed on her Son, from the manger of Bethlehem to the cross on Calvary, help us to meet and know Him as He wishes, so that we can live enlightened by Him, and bring to the world fruits of justice and peace.

After the Angelus

Dear brothers and sisters,

I address a cordial greeting to all of you present here, faithful of Rome and from many parts of the world.

I greet the pilgrims of Slovakia and those of Madrid; the parish groups from Sant’Agnello, Pescara, Chieti, and Cheremule; the young people of the diocese of Brescia and those of the “Romana-Vittoria” deanery of Milan.

I greet the Italian Folkloric Union, the group of families from Rubiera and candidates for confirmation from Novi di Modena.

Yesterday I visited Pietrelcina and San Giovanni Rotondo. I greet affectionately and thank the communities of the dioceses of Benevento and Manfredonia, the bishops – Msgr. Accrocca and Msgr. Castoro – the consecrated, the faithful, the authorities; I thank them for the warm welcome and I hold all of them in my heart, but especially the sick of the Home for the Relief of Suffering, the elderly and the young people. I thank all those who prepared this visit that truly I will not forget. May Father Pio bless you all.

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