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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 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 reading (cf. *Mk* 6: 1-6) presents Jesus, who returns to Nazareth and, on the Sabbath, begins to teach in the synagogue. Ever since He left and began to preach in the neighbouring hamlets and villages, He had not set foot in His homeland. He returned. Therefore, the whole town was ready to hear this son of the people, whose reputation as wise teacher and powerful healer had by then spread throughout Galilee and beyond. However, what could have been a success, turned into a resounding rejection, to the point that Jesus was unable to work any miracles there, but only a few healings (cf. v. 5). The evangelist Mark reconstructs in detail the dynamic of that day: at first, the people of Nazareth listened and remained astonished; then, perplexed, they asked "where did this man get all these things", this wisdom? And, in the end, they were scandalized, recognizing in Him the carpenter, son of Mary, whom they had seen grow up (v. 2-3). Therefore, Jesus ended with the expression that became proverbial: "A prophet is not without honour except in his own town" (v. 4).

We wonder: how did Jesus' countrymen pass from wonder to incredulity? They made a comparison between

Jesus' humble origin and His present capacities: He is a carpenter; He hasn't studied, yet He preaches better than the scribes and works miracles. And, instead of opening themselves to the reality, they are scandalized. According to the inhabitants of Nazareth, God is too great to lower Himself to speak to such a simple man! It is the scandal of the Incarnation: the disconcerting event of a God made flesh, who thinks with the mind of a man, works and acts with the hands of a man, loves with the heart of a man, a God Who gets tired, eats and sleeps like one of us. The Son of God overturns every human mindset: it is not the disciples who washed the Lord's feet, but rather the Lord Who washed the disciples' feet (cf. *Jn 13:1-20*). This is a reason for scandal and incredulity not only at that time, but in every age, even today.

The reversal wrought by Jesus commits His disciples of yesterday and of today to a personal and communal test. Indeed, it can happen even in our time that prejudices are fuelled which prevent us from grasping reality. However, the Lord invites us to assume an attitude of humble listening and docile expectation, because God's grace often presents itself to us in surprising ways, which do not correspond to our expectations. Let us think together of Mother Teresa of Calcutta, for instance. A little Sister – no one gave 10 lire for her – who went through the streets to pick up the dying, so that they would have a dignified death. With prayer and her work, this little Sister worked wonders! The smallness of a woman revolutionized the work of charity in the Church. She is an example from our times. God does not conform to prejudices. We must make the effort to open our heart and mind to receive the divine reality that comes to wards us. It is about having faith: lack of faith is an obstacle to God's grace. Many baptized persons live as though Christ did not exist: the gestures and signs of the faith are repeated, but they do not correspond to a real adherence to the person of Jesus and His Gospel. Every Christian – all of us, each one of us – is called to reflect further on this fundamental belonging, seeking to witness it with a coherent conduct of life, whose connecting thread is always charity.

Through the intercession of the Virgin Mary, let us ask the Lord to soften the hardness of hearts and narrow-mindedness, so that we may be open to His grace, to His truth and to His mission of goodness and mercy, which is addressed to all, without exception.

After the Angelus

Dear brothers and sisters,

Yesterday in Bari, with the Patriarchs of the Churches of the Middle East and their representatives, we experienced a special day of prayer and reflection for peace in that region. I give thanks to God for this meeting, which was an eloquent sign of Christian unity, and involved the enthusiastic participation of the people of God. I thank again the Brother Heads of the Churches and those they represent; I was truly edified by their attitude and their witness. I thank the archbishop of Bari, a humble brother and servant, the collaborations, and all the faithful who accompanied and supported us with prayer and their joyful presence.

Today is "Sea Sunday", dedicated to sailors and fishermen. I pray for them and for their families, as well as for the chaplains and volunteers of the Discipleship of the Sea. I would like to remember in particular those who in the sea experience situations of unworthy work, and also those who make efforts to liberate the seas from pollution.

I address a cordial greeting to you all, Romans and pilgrims! I greet the faithful from Poland with a special thought for the participants in the great annual pilgrimage of the family of Radio Maria to the Shrine of Częstochowa. I greet the altar servers from the Philippines with their families, young people from Padua, the group of students and teachers from Brescia and scouts from Pont-Saint-Martin, Val d'Aosta. And I see Brazilian flags... I greet the Brazilians! Take heart! There will be another time...

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

