



# SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE **BOLLETTINO**

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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 (*Lk 15: 1-32*) begins with some people who criticize Jesus, seeing Him in the company of publicans and sinners, and say with outrage: "This man receives sinners and eats with them" (2). This phrase actually reveals itself as a wonderful announcement. Jesus welcomes sinners and eats with them. This is what happens to us, in every Mass, in every church: Jesus is happy to welcome us to his table, where he offers himself for us. This is the phrase that we could write on the doors of our churches: "Here Jesus welcomes sinners and invites them to His table". And the Lord, responding to those who criticized Him, recounts three parables, three wonderful parables, which show His predilection for those who feel they are far from Him. Today it would be nice if each one of you took the Gospel, the Gospel of Luke, chapter 15, and read the three parables. They are wonderful.

In the first parable he says: "What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open country, and go after the one that is lost, until he finds it?" (4) Which one of you? A person of common sense does not: he makes two calculations and sacrifices one to keep the ninety-nine. God, on the other hand, does not resign Himself to Him, you who do not yet know the beauty of His love, you who have not yet accepted Jesus at the centre of your life, you who cannot overcome your sin, you who perhaps do not believe in love because of the bad things that have happened in your life. In the second parable,

you are that little coin that the Lord does not resign Himself to losing and seeks relentlessly: He wants to tell you that you are precious in His eyes, that you are unique. No one can replace you in God's heart. You have a place, you are, and no one can replace you; and me too, no one can replace me in God's heart. And in the third parable God is the father who awaits the return of the prodigal son: God always awaits us, He does not tire, He does not lose heart. Because we are, each one of us is, that son embraced once again, that coin found, that sheep caressed and put back on the shoulders. He waits every day for us to realize His love. And you say: "But I have done too many things, I have done too many!". Do not be afraid: God loves you, He loves you as you are and He knows that only His love can change your life.

But this infinite love of God for us sinners, which is the heart of the Gospel, can be rejected. It is what the eldest son of the parable does. He does not understand love at that moment and has in mind more a master than a father. It is a risk for us too: to believe in a god who is more rigorous than merciful, a god who defeats evil with power rather than forgiveness. It is not so, God saves with love, not with force; proposing Himself, not imposing Himself. But the eldest son, who does not accept the mercy of his father, closes himself off, making a worse error: he presumes himself to be right, he presumes himself to be betrayed and judges everything on the basis of his thought of justice. So he becomes angry with his brother and reproaches his father: "You killed the fattened calf for him!" (30). This son of yours: not my brother, but your son. He feels that he is an only child. We also make mistakes when we believe ourselves to be right, when we think that the bad guys are the others. Let us not believe ourselves to be good, because alone, without the help of God Who is good, we do not know how to overcome evil. Today do not forget, take the Gospel and read Luke's three parables, chapter 15. It will do you good, it will be healthy for you.

How can we defeat evil? By accepting God's forgiveness and the forgiveness of our brothers and sisters. It happens every time we go to confession: there we receive the love of the Father which overcomes our sin: it is no longer there, God forgets it. God, when He forgives, loses His memory, He forgets our sins, He forgets. God is so good to us! Not like us, who after saying "It doesn't matter", at the first opportunity we remember the wrongs we have suffered, with interest. No, God erases evil, He makes us new within us and thus makes joy, not sadness, not darkness in the heart, not suspicion, but joy reborn in us.

Brothers and sisters, take courage, with God no sin has the last word. May Our Lady, who unties the knots of life, free us from the pretence of believing ourselves just and make us feel the need to go to the Lord, who is always waiting for us to embrace us, to forgive us.

### After the Angelus

Dear brothers and sisters,

Last week, the long-awaited exchange of prisoners between the Russian Federation and Ukraine took place. I welcome the liberated people, who have been able to re-embrace their loved ones, and I continue to pray for a speedy end to the conflict and for lasting peace in eastern Ukraine.

Yesterday in Forlì Benedetta Bianchi Porro, who died in 1964 at the age of 28, was proclaimed Blessed. Her whole life was afflicted by illness, and the Lord gave her the grace to endure it, indeed to transform it into a luminous witness of faith and love. And today in Limburg, Germany, Father Richard Henkes is proclaimed Blessed. A Pallottine priest, he was killed in hatred of the faith in Dachau in 1945. May the example of these two courageous disciples of Christ also sustain our path to holiness. Let us applaud the new Blesseds!

I greet you all with affection, Romans and pilgrims from different countries: families, parish groups, associations.

I greet the faithful of Honduras and Bolivia; the young African entrepreneurs committed to working together - *harambe* - for the future of Africa; and the pilgrimage by electric cars from Poland.

I greet the military personnel gathered in memory of the Servant of God Father Gianfranco Chiti; the Oblate Sisters of the Most Holy Redeemer; the faithful of Montecchio Emilia with their Venezuelan friends; and confirmands from Crotone. I greet the UNITALSI group and I bless the great national pilgrimage to Lourdes that will take place in the coming days.

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

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