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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 St. Peter's Square.

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

Before the Angelus

Dear brothers and sisters, good morning!

And truly, today is a beautiful day... We celebrate today the feast of the Holy Family of Nazareth. The term "holy" places this family within the sphere of holiness which is a gift from God but, at the same time, is free and responsible adherence to God's plan. This was the case for the family of Nazareth: they were totally available to God's will.

How can we not wonder, for example, at Mary's docility to the action of the Holy Spirit Who asks her to become the mother of the Messiah? Because Mary, like every young woman of her time, was about to realize her life project, that is, to marry Joseph.

But when she realises that God is calling her to a particular mission, she does not hesitate to proclaim herself His "servant" (cf. *Lk* 1: 38). Jesus will exalt her greatness not so much for her role as a mother, but for her obedience to God. Jesus said: "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it" (*Lk* 11: 28), like Mary. And when she does not fully understand the events that involve her, Mary meditates in silence, reflects

and adores the divine initiative. Her presence at the foot of the cross consecrates this total willingness.

Then, with regard to Joseph, the Gospel does not give us a single word: he does not speak, but he acts, obeying. He is the man of silence, the man of obedience.

Today's Gospel reading (cf. *Mt 2: 13-15, 19-23*) recalls this obedience of the righteous Joseph three times, referring to the flight to Egypt and the return to the land of Israel. Under God's guidance, represented by the Angel, Joseph distances his family from Herod's threats, and saves them. The Holy Family is thus in solidarity with all the families of the world forced into exile, in solidarity with all those who are compelled to abandon their own land due to repression, violence, and war.

Finally, the third person of the Holy Family, Jesus. He is the will of the Father: in Him, says Saint Paul, there was no "yes" and "no", but only "yes" (cf. *2 Cor 1: 19*). And this is made manifest in many moments of His earthly life. For example, the episode at the temple when He responded to the anguished parents who sought Him out: "Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" (*Lk 2: 49*); His continual repetition: "My food is to do the will of Him Who sent me and to accomplish His work" (*Jn 4: 34*); His prayer in the olive grove: "My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, Your will be done" (*Mt 26: 42*). All these events are the perfect realisation of the very words of Christ Who says: "Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired [...] Then I said, 'Behold, I have come to do your will, O God, as it is written of me in the scroll of the book'" (*Heb 10: 5-7; Psalm 40: 7-9*).

Mary, Joseph, Jesus: the Holy Family of Nazareth which represents a choral response to the will of the Father: the three members of this family help each other reciprocally to discover God's plan. They prayed, worked, communicated. And I ask myself: you, in your family, do you know how to communicate or are you like those kids at the table, each one with their mobile phone, while they are chatting? In that table there seems to be a silence as if they were at Mass... But they do not communicate between themselves. We must resume dialogue in the family: fathers, parents, sons, grandparents and siblings must communicate with one another ... This is today's homework, right on the day of the Holy Family. May the Holy Family be a model for our families, so that parents and children may support each other mutually in adherence to the Gospel, the basis of the holiness of the family.

Let us entrust to Mary, "Queen of the Family", all the families in the world, especially those who suffer or who are in distress, and invoke upon them her maternal protection.

After the Angelus

Dear brothers and sisters,

Let us pray to the Lord for the victims of the horrible terrorist attack that took place yesterday in Mogadishu, in Somalia, where more than seventy people were killed in a car bomb explosion. I am close to all the relatives and to those who mourn their loss. Let us pray together: *Hail Mary...*

Then I greet all the Romans, pilgrims, parish groups, associations and young people. Today I address a special greeting to the families present here and to those who participate from home via television and radio. The family is a precious treasure: we must always support it, protect it: keep on!

Then I greet the students of Forlì, the young people preparing for Confirmation from Adrara San Martino, from Calcinate, and the teenage group of the *San Giuliano* parish of Albino, Bergamo.

I greet you all, and wish you all a good Sunday and a peaceful end to the year. Let us end the year in peace, peace of heart: this I wish to you. And in the family, communicating with each other. I thank you again for your good wishes and your prayers. Please continue to pray for me. Have a good lunch, and *arrivederci!*
