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The Pope's words at the Angelus prayer

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 introduction to the Marian prayer:

Before the Angelus

Dear brothers and sisters, good afternoon!

This Sunday's Gospel passage (*Mt 25: 1-13*) invites us to prolong the reflection on eternal life that we began on the occasion of the Feast of All Saints and the Commemoration of the Faithful Departed. Jesus recounts the parable of the ten virgins invited to a wedding feast, symbol of the Kingdom of heaven.

In Jesus' time it was customary for weddings to be celebrated at night; so the procession of guests took place with lit lamps. Some bridesmaids are foolish: they take their lamps but do not take oil with them; instead, the wise ones take the oil with them together with their lamps. The bridegroom is late, late in coming, and they all fall asleep. When a voice alerts them that the bridegroom is about to arrive, the foolish ones, at that moment, realise that they do not have oil for their lamps; they ask the wise ones for some, but they reply that they cannot give any oil, because there would not be enough for them all. While the foolish virgins go to buy oil, the bridegroom arrives. The wise virgins enter the banquet hall with him, and the door is closed. The others arrive too late and are turned away.

It is clear that with this parable, Jesus wants to tell us that we must be prepared for His coming. Not only the final coming, but also for the everyday encounters, great and small, with a view to that encounter, for which the *lamp of faith* is not enough; we also need the *oil of charity* and good works. As the apostle Paul says, the faith that truly unites us to Jesus is, "faith working through love" (*Gal 5: 6*). It is what is represented by the behaviour of the wise virgins. Being wise and prudent means not waiting until the last moment to correspond to God's grace, but

to do so actively and immediately, starting right now. "I ... yes, I will convert soon"... "Convert today! Change your life today!" "Yes, yes, tomorrow". And the same thing is said tomorrow, and so it never arrives. Today! If we want to be ready for the final encounter with the Lord, we must cooperate with Him now and perform good deeds inspired by His love.

We know that it happens that, unfortunately, we forget the purpose of our life, that is, the definitive appointment with God, thus losing the sense of expectation and making the present absolute. When one makes the present absolute, he or she looks only to the present, losing the sense of expectation, which is so good, and so necessary, and also pulls us away from the contradictions of the moment. This attitude - when one loses the sense of expectation - precludes any view of the hereafter: people do everything as if we they will never depart for the other life. And so people care only about possessing, of going about, establishing themselves... And more and more. If we allow ourselves to be guided by what seems most attractive to us, of what we like, by the search for our interests, our life becomes sterile; we do not accumulate any reserve of oil for our lamp, and it will be extinguished before the Lord's coming. We must live today, but a today that goes towards tomorrow, towards that coming, a present full of hope. If, on the other hand, we are vigilant and correspond to God's grace by doing good, we can serenely await the bridegroom's coming. The Lord will be able to come even while we are sleeping: this will not worry us, because we have the reserve of oil accumulated through our daily good works, accumulated with that expectation of the Lord, that He may come as soon as possible and that He may come to take us with Him.

Let us invoke the intercession of Mary Most Holy, that she may help us to live an active faith, as she did: it is the shining lamp with which we can pass through the night beyond death and reach the great feast of life.

After the Angelus

Dear brothers and sisters!

Yesterday in Barcelona, Joan Roig y Diggle, layperson and martyr, was proclaimed Blessed. He was killed at just nineteen years of age during the Spanish Civil War. He was a witness to Jesus in the workplace and remained faithful to Him up to the supreme gift of life. May his example inspire in us all, especially in the young, the desire to live the Christian vocation fully. A round of applause to this young Blessed, so brave!

I see a flag there, that makes me think of the populations of Central America, hit in recent days by a violent hurricane, which claimed many victims and caused immense damage, aggravated by the already difficult situation of the pandemic. May the Lord welcome the deceased, comfort their families and sustain those most in need, as well as all those who are doing all they can to help them.

I am following with concern the news arriving from Ethiopia. While I urge that the temptation of an armed conflict be rejected, I invite everyone to prayer and to fraternal respect, to dialogue and to a peaceful end to the disagreements.

Today, in Tunisia, the meetings of the "Libyan Political Dialogue Forum" will begin, with the involvement of all parties. Given the importance of the event, I very much hope that at this delicate time a solution to the long suffering of the Libyan people will be found, and that the recent agreement for a permanent ceasefire be respected and implemented. Let us pray for the delegates of the Forum, for peace and stability in Libya.

Today in Italy we celebrate the day of Thanksgiving on the theme "Water, blessing of the earth". Water is vital for agriculture, and it is also vital for life! I am close in prayer and affection to the rural world, especially to small-scale farmers. Their work is more important than ever in this time of crisis. I join with the Italian bishops who urge the protection of water as a common good, the use of which must respect its universal destination.

And now I address my greeting to you, Romans and pilgrims of various countries: families, parish groups,

associations and individual faithful. I wish you all a good Sunday. Please, do not forget to pray for me. Enjoy your lunch, and *arrivederci!*
