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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 are the Pope's words of introduction to the Marian prayer:

Before the Angelus

Dear brothers and sisters, *buongiorno!*

The Gospel of today's Liturgy recounts a brief dialogue between Jesus and the Apostle John, who speaks on behalf of all the entire group of disciples. They saw a man who was casting out demons in the name of the Lord, but they stopped him because he was not part of their group. At this point, Jesus invites them not to hinder those who do good, because they contribute to the fulfilment of God's plan (cf. *Mk* 9:38-41). Then He admonishes them: instead of dividing people into good and bad, we are all called to watch be vigilant over our own hearts, lest we succumb to evil and bring scandal to others (cf. vv. 42-45, 47-48).

In short, Jesus' words reveal a *temptation*, and offer an *exhortation*. The temptation is that of *closedness*. The disciples would like to hinder a good deed simply because it is performed by someone who did not belong to their group. They think they have the "exclusive right over Jesus", and that they are the only ones authorised to work for the Kingdom of God. But in this way, they end up considering feeling that they are themselves privileged and consider others as outsiders, to the extent of becoming hostile towards them. Brothers and sisters, every closure tends in fact us to keep us at a distance from those who do not think like we do, and this – we know – is the root of so many evils in history: of the absolutism that has often generated dictatorships and so much violence towards those who are different.

But we need to be vigilant about closure in the Church too. Because the devil, who is the divider – this is what the word "devil" means, the one who divides – always insinuates suspicions to divide and exclude people. He

tempts with using cunning, and it can happen as with those disciples, who go so far as to end up excluding even those someone who had cast out the devil himself! At times we too, instead of being humble and open communities, can give the impression of being the “top of the class” and keeping others at a distance; instead of trying to walk with everyone, we can display show off our “believer’s license”: “I am a believer”, “I am Catholic”, “I belong to this association, to that one”, and the others, poor things, do not. This is a sin. Showing off one’s “believer’s license” to judge and to exclude. Let us ask for the grace to overcome the temptation to judge and to categorise, and may God preserve us from the “nest” mentality, that of jealously guarding ourselves in the small group of those who consider themselves good: the priest with his loyal followers, the pastoral workers closed up among themselves so that no one can infiltrate, the movements and associations in their own particular charism, and so on. Closed. All this runs the risk of turning Christian communities into places of separation and not of communion. The Holy Spirit does not want closedness; He wants openness, and welcoming communities where there is a place for everyone.

And then in the Gospel there is Jesus’ *exhortation*: instead of judging everything and everyone, let us beware be careful of ourselves! Indeed, the risk is that of being inflexible towards others and indulgent towards ourselves. And Jesus urges us not to descend to making pacts with evil, with striking images: “If something in you causes you to sin, cut it off!” (cf. vv. 43-48). If something harms you, cut it off! He does not say, “If something is a reason for scandal, stop, think about it, improve a bit...”. No: “Cut it off! Immediately! Jesus is radical in this, demanding, but for our own good, like a good doctor. Every cuttrim, every pruning, is so we can grow better and bear fruit in love.

Let us ask, then: what is it in me that is contrary to the Gospel? What, in concrete terms, does Jesus want me to cut out of my life?

Let us pray to Mary Immaculate, that she may help us be welcoming towards others and vigilant over ourselves.

After the Angelus

Dear brothers and sisters,

Today we celebrate World Day of Migrants and Refugees, which this year is on the theme: “Towards an ever wider we”. It is necessary to walk together, without prejudice and without fear, beside those who are most vulnerable: migrants, refugees, displaced persons, victims of human trafficking, and the abandoned. We are called to build an ever more inclusive world, that excludes no-one.

I join with those, in various parts of the world, who are celebrating this Day; I greet the faithful gathered in Loreto for the initiative of the Italian Episcopal Conference in aid of migrants and refugees. I greet and thank the various ethnic communities present here in the Square with their flags; and I greet the representatives of the Italian *Caritas* “APRI” project, as well as the *Migrantes* Office of the diocese of Rome and the *Centro Astalli*. Thank you all for your generous efforts!

And before leaving the Square, I invite you to go over to the monument over there – where Cardinal Czerny is – the boat with the migrants, and to look closely at the expressions of those people and grasp in that look the hope that every migrant has, to start living again. Go over there and look at that monument. Do not close the doors to their hope.

I express my closeness and solidarity to those who have been affected by the eruption of the volcano on the island of La Palma, in the Canaries. I think in particular of those who have been forced to leave their homes. Let us pray to Our Lady, venerated on that island as to *Nuestra Señora de las Nieves*, for these people who have been sorely tried, and for the rescuers.

Today, Don Giovanni Fornasini, priest and martyr, will be beatified. A parish priest zealous in charity, he did not abandon his flock during the tragic period of the Second World War, but rather he defended it to the point of bloodshed. May his heroic witness help us to face life's trials with fortitude. A round of applause for the new Blessed!

And I greet you all, Romans and pilgrims from various countries. In particular, I greet the *Opera Don Orione* lay movement and the representation of parents and young people joined in the fight against cancer.

I wish you all a blessed Sunday. And please, please do not forget to pray for me. Enjoy your meal, and *arrivederci!*
