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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 pilgrims and faithful 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!*

In the Gospel of this Sunday's liturgy, we read that "the Lord appointed seventy-two [disciples], and sent them on ahead of him, two by two, into every town and place where he himself was about to come" (Lk 10:1). The disciples were sent *two by two*, not individually. To go on a mission two by two, from a practical point of view, would seem to bring more disadvantages than advantages. There is the risk that the two do not get along, that they would go at a different pace, that one would get tired or sick along the way, forcing the other to stop. When one is alone, on the other hand, it seems the journey would become swifter and smoother. However, Jesus does not think like this: he does not send people out alone before him, but disciples who go *two by two*. Let us ask ourselves a question: what is the reason for this choice of the Lord?

It was the task of the disciples to go ahead into the villages to prepare the people to receive Jesus; and the instructions he gives them are not so much about what they should say, but how they *should be*: that is, not on the "phrasebook" of what they should say, no; on the witness of life, the witness to give rather than the words to say. Indeed, he defines them as *workers*: they are therefore required to *work*, to evangelize through their behaviour. And the first practical action with which the disciples carry out their mission is precisely that of going *two by two*. The disciples are not "free riders", preachers who do not know how to yield the word to another. It is primarily the very life of the disciples that announces the Gospel: their knowing how to be together, their mutual respect, their not wanting to prove that they are more capable than the other, their concordant reference to the one Master.

Perfect pastoral plans can be drawn up, and well-designed projects implemented, organized down to the last detail; one can summon crowds and have many means; but if there is no willingness to fraternity, the mission cannot advance. Once, a missionary told of how he left for Africa with a confrere. However, after some time he separated from him, stopping in a village where he successfully implemented a series of building projects for the good of the community. Everything was working well. But one day he had a jolt: he realized that his life was that of a good entrepreneur, always in the midst of building sites and paperwork! But... and that “but” remained there. So, he left the management to others, to the laypeople, and joined his confrere. He thus understood why the Lord had sent the disciples “two by two”: the evangelizing mission is not based on personal activism, that is, on “doing”, but on the witness of brotherly love, even amid the difficulties that living together entails.

So, we might wonder: how do we take the good news of the Gospel to others? Do we do so with a fraternal spirit and style, or in the manner of the world, with self-promotion, competitiveness and efficiency. Let us ask ourselves whether we have the capacity to collaborate, whether we know how to take decisions together, sincerely respecting those who are alongside us and taking into account their point of view, whether we do so in community, not by ourselves. Indeed, it is above all in this way that the life of the disciple allows that of the Master to shine through, truly announcing it to others.

May the Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church, teach us how to prepare the way for the Lord with the witness of fraternity.

### **After the Angelus**

Dear brothers and sisters!

Yesterday, in San Ramón de la Nueva Orán, in Argentina, Pedro Ortiz de Zárate, diocesan priest, and Juan Antonio Solinas, priest of the Society of Jesus, were beatified. These two missionaries, who dedicated their life to the transmission of the faith and the defence of indigenous populations, were killed in 1683 because they brought the message of peace of the Gospel. May the example of these martyrs help us to bear witness to the Good News without compromise, dedicating ourselves generously to the service of the weakest. A round of applause for the new Blessed!

Let us continue to pray for peace in Ukraine and in the entire world. I appeal to the heads of nations and international organizations to react to the tendency to accentuate conflict and confrontation. The world needs peace. Not a peace based on the balance of weapons, on mutual fear. No, that will not do. This means turning history back seventy years. The Ukrainian crisis should have been, but – if there is the will – can still become a challenge for wise statesmen, capable of building, with dialogue, a better world for the new generations. With God’s help, this is always possible! But it is necessary to pass from the strategies of political, economic and military power to a plan for global peace: no to a world divided between conflicting powers; yes to a world united between peoples and civilizations that respect each other.

I greet you all, dear Romans and pilgrims! In particular, I greet the lectors and ministrants of Dobra, Poland; the students of Slavonski Brod, Croatia; the Albanese faithful with their parish priests and the travelling team of the Neocatechumenal Way in Albania. I greet the faithful of Naples, Ascoli Piceno, Perugia and Catania, and the young candidates for confirmation from Tremignon and Vaccarino, in the diocese of Vicenza.

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

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