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## The Pope's words at the Angelus prayer

At midday today, Solemnity of All Saints, 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, happy feast day, *buongiorno!*

Today, we celebrate all the saints, and we might have a misleading impression: we might think we are celebrating those sisters and brothers who in life were perfect, always straight, precise, or rather "starched". Instead, today's Gospel belies this stereotypical view, this "picture-perfect holiness". In fact, the Beatitudes of Jesus (cf. *Mt* 5:1-12), which are the identity card of saints, show the complete opposite: they speak of a countercultural life, a revolutionary life! The saints are the true revolutionaries.

Let us take, for example, a very topical beatitude: "Blessed are the peacemakers" (v. 9), and we see how the peace of Jesus is very different from that we imagine. We all long for peace, but often what we want is not really peace, it is to be *at peace*, to be left in peace, to have no problems but to have tranquility. Jesus, instead, does not call blessed the calm, those who are in peace, but those who make peace and strive to make peace, the constructors, the *peacemakers*. Indeed, peace must be built, and like any construction it requires effort, collaboration, patience. We would like peace to rain down from above, but instead the Bible speaks of a "sowing of peace" (*Zech* 8:12), because it germinates from the soil of life, from the seed of our heart; it grows in silence, day after day, through works of justice and works of mercy, as the luminous witnesses we are celebrating today show us. Again, we are led to believe that peace comes by force and power: for Jesus it is the opposite. His life and that of the saints tell us that the seed of peace, in order to grow and bear fruit, must first die. Peace is not achieved by conquering or defeating someone, it is never violent, it is never armed. I was watching the television programme "*A Sua Immagine*" ("In His Image") – many saints who have fought, have made peace but through

work, giving their own lives, offering their lives.

How then does one become a peacemaker? First of all, one must *disarm the heart*. Yes, because we are all equipped with aggressive thoughts against each other, and cutting words, and we think to defend ourselves with the barbed wire of lamentation and the concrete walls of indifference, and between lamentation and indifference we complain, and this is not peace, it is war. The seed of peace calls for the demilitarization of the field of the heart. How is your heart? Is it already demilitarized or is it like that, with those things, with complaint and indifference, with aggression? And how does one demilitarize the heart. By opening ourselves to Jesus, who is “our peace” (*Eph 2:14*); by standing before his Cross, which is the cathedra of peace; by receiving from him, in Confession, “forgiveness and peace”. This is where we begin, because being peacemakers, being saints, is not our ability, they are gifts, it is one of his gifts, it is grace.

Brothers and sisters, let us look within and ask ourselves: are we peacemakers? In the places where we live, study and work, do we bring tension, words that hurt, chatter that poisons, controversy that divides? Or do we open up the way to peace, forgiving those who have offended us; do we care for those who are at the margins, do we redress some injustice by helping those who have less? This is called building peace.

A final question may arise, however, which applies to every beatitude: is it worth living this way? Isn't it losing out? It is Jesus who gives us the answer: the peacemakers “will be called children of God” (*Mt 5:9*): in the world they seem out of place, because they do not yield to the logic of power and prevailing, in Heaven they will be the closest to God, the most like him. But, in reality, even here those who prevail remain empty-handed, while those who love everyone and hurt no one win: as the Psalm says, “there is a future for a man of peace” (cf. *Ps 37:37*).

May the Virgin Mary, Queen of all saints, help us to be peacemakers in our daily lives.

### After the Angelus

The day after tomorrow I leave for an apostolic journey in the Kingdom of Bahrain, where I will stay until Sunday. As of now, I would like to greet and give heartfelt thanks to the King, the Authorities, the brothers and sisters in faith, and all the population of the country, especially those who are working in preparation for this visit. It will be a Journey dedicated to dialogue: indeed, I will participate in a *Forum* on the theme of the indispensable need for the East and West to move closer together for the good of human coexistence; I will have the opportunity to talk with religious representatives, particularly Islamic. I ask you all to accompany me with prayer, so that every meeting and event may be a fruitful occasion to support, in God's name, the cause of fraternity and peace, for which our times are in extreme and urgent need.

I affectionately greet you all, Romans and pilgrims from Italy and various countries. In particular, I greet the faithful of Setúbal, in Portugal, and the teenagers giving their profession of faith from Cassina de' Pecchi, diocese of Milan.

I am happy to welcome the participants in the *Corsa dei Santi* race, organized by the “Don Bosco Missions” Foundation to live the commemoration of All Saints in a dimension of popular celebration. Thank you for your beautiful initiative and for your presence!

Dear brothers and sisters, please, let us not forget martyred Ukraine: let us pray for peace, let us pray that there may be in peace in Ukraine.

Tomorrow is dedicated to the commemoration of all the deceased faithful. Besides the traditional visit to the tombs of our loved ones, I invite you to remember them in prayer for the repose of their souls, especially during Holy Mass.

I wish you all a good feast. And please, do not forget to pray for me. Enjoy your lunch, and *arrivederci!*

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