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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*, Good Sunday!

In today's Gospel, Jesus repeats to his disciples three different times: "have no fear" (Mt 10:26, 28, 31). Shortly prior to this, he had spoken to them about the persecutions they would have to undergo for the Gospel, a fact that is still a reality. Since its beginning, in fact, the Church has experienced, together with joys – of which she has had many – many persecutions. It seems paradoxical: the proclamation of the Kingdom of God is a message of peace and justice, founded on fraternal charity and on forgiveness; and yet it meets with opposition, violence, persecution. Jesus, however, says not to fear, not because everything will be all right in the world, no, but because we are precious to his Father and nothing that is good will be lost. He therefore tells us not to let fear block us, but rather to fear one other thing, only one. What is the thing Jesus tells us we should fear?

We discover what it is through an image Jesus uses today: the image of "Gehenna" (cf. v. 28). The valley of "Gehenna" was a place the inhabitants of Jerusalem knew well. It was the city's large garbage dump. Jesus speaks about it in order to say that the true fear we should have, is that of *throwing away one's own life*. Jesus says, "Yes, be afraid of that". It was like saying: you do not need so much to be afraid of suffering misunderstanding and criticism, of losing prestige and economic advantages to remain faithful to the Gospel, no, but of wasting your existence in the pursuit of trivial things that do not fill life with meaning.

This is important for us today. Even today, in fact, some are ridiculed or discriminated against for not following certain fads, which, however, place second-rate realities at the centre – for example, to follow after things

instead of people, achievement instead of relationships. Let us give an example: I am thinking of some parents who need to work to maintain their family, but who cannot live for work alone – they need enough time to be with their children. I am also thinking of a priest or a sister who need to dedicate themselves to their service, without, however, forgetting to dedicate time to be with Jesus, otherwise, they will fall into spiritual worldliness and lose the sense of who they are. And again, I am thinking of a young man or woman who have thousands of commitments and passions – school, sports, various interests, cell phones and social networks – but who need to meet people and achieve great dreams, without losing time on passing things that do not leave their mark.

All of this, brothers and sisters, requires some renunciation regarding the idols of efficiency and consumerism. But this is necessary so as not to get lost in things that end up getting thrown out, as they threw things out in Gehenna back then. And people often end up in today's Gehenna's, instead. Let's think, of the least who are often treated like waste products and unwanted objects. There is a cost to remain faithful to what counts. The cost is going against the tide, the cost is freeing oneself from being conditioned by popular opinion, the cost is being separated from those who "follow the current". But it does not matter, Jesus says. What matters is not to throw away the greatest good: life. This is the only thing that should frighten us.

So let us ask ourselves: I, what do I fear? Not having what I like? Not reaching the goals society imposes? The judgement of others? Or rather of not pleasing the Lord, and not putting his Gospel in first place? Mary, ever Virgin, Mother most Wise, help us to be wise and courageous in the choices we make.

### After the Angelus

Dear brothers and sisters,

I was very saddened by what happened a few days ago in the women's Penitentiary Centre of Támara in Honduras. Terrible violence between rival gangs caused death and suffering. I pray for the deceased; I pray for their families. May the Virgin of Suyapa, Mother of Honduras, help hearts to open themselves to reconciliation and to create space for fraternal co-existence, even within prisons.

In these days, the 40th anniversary of the disappearance of Emanuela Orlandi occurred. I wish to take advantage of this occasion to express once again my closeness to the members of her family, especially her mother, and assure them of my prayers. I extend a remembrance to all families who bear the sorrow of a dear one who has disappeared.

I greet all of you, pilgrims from Rome, from Italy and various countries, in particular, to the faithful from Bogotá, Colombia.

I greet the Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order from Pisa; the children from Gubbio, Perugia and Spoleto; the group from Limbadi who are celebrating the young Leo; those participating in the motorcycle pilgrimage from Cesena and Longiano; and the Radio Maria volunteers who, with the huge banner, invite "everyone under the mantle" of the Virgin Mary, to implore the gift of peace from God. And we ask this especially for the suffering Ukrainian people.

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

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