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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 approximately fifteen thousand faithful and pilgrims gathered in Saint Peter's Square.

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

Dear brothers and sisters, blessed Sunday!

The Gospel of today's liturgy (cf. *Mk* 3:20-35) tells us that Jesus, after beginning His public ministry, faced a twofold reaction: that of his relatives, who were worried and feared He had gone a little mad, and that of the religious authorities, who accused Him of acting under the influence of an evil spirit. In reality, Jesus preached and healed the sick by the power of the Holy Spirit. And it was precisely the Spirit that made him divinely *free*, that is, capable of *loving and serving without measure or conditioning*. Jesus, free. Let us pause a while to contemplate this freedom of Jesus.

Jesus was free in relation to wealth: therefore He left the security of His village, Nazareth, to embrace a poor life full of uncertainties (cf. *Mt* 6:25-34), freely taking care of the sick and whoever came to ask Him for help, without ever asking for anything in exchange (cf. *Mt* 10:8). The gratuitousness of Jesus' ministry is this. And it is also the gratuitousness of every ministry.

He was free with regard to power: indeed, despite calling many to follow Him, He never obliged anyone to do so, nor did He ever seek out the support of the powerful, but always took the side of the last, teaching His disciples to do likewise, as He had done (cf. *Lk* 22:25-27).

Finally, Jesus was free of the quest for fame and approval, and for this reason He never gave up speaking the truth, even at the cost of not being understood (cf. *Mk* 3:21), of becoming unpopular, even to the point of dying on the cross, not allowing Himself to be intimidated, nor bought, nor corrupted by anything or anyone (cf. *Mt* 10:28).

Jesus was a free man. He was free in the face of wealth, free in the face of power, free in the face of the quest

for fame. And this is important for us too. Indeed, if we let ourselves be conditioned by the quest for pleasure, power, money or consensus, we become slaves to these things. If instead we allow God's freely-given love to fill us and expand our heart, and if we let it overflow spontaneously, by giving it back to others, with our whole selves, without fear, calculation or conditioning, then we grow in freedom, and spread its good fragrance around us too.

So we can ask ourselves: am I a free person? Or do I let myself be imprisoned by the myths of money, power and success, sacrificing my serenity and peace, and that of others, to these things? In the places where I live and work, do I spread the fresh air of freedom, sincerity and spontaneity?

May the Virgin Mary help us live and love like Jesus taught us, in the freedom of the children of God (cf. *Rom* 8:15,20-23).

After the Angelus

The day after tomorrow, in Jordan, an international conference will be held on the humanitarian situation in Gaza, convened by the King of Jordan, the President of Egypt and the Secretary General of the United Nations. While I thank them for this important initiative, I encourage the international community to act urgently, by all means, to come to the aid of the people of Gaza, exhausted by the war. Humanitarian aid must be able to reach those in need, and no one can prevent it.

Yesterday marked the tenth anniversary of the invocation of peace in the Vatican, attended by the Israeli President, the late Shimon Peres, and the Palestinian President Abu Mazen. That meeting showed that joining hands is possible, and that it takes courage to make peace, far more courage than to wage war. Therefore I encourage the ongoing negotiations between the parties, even though they are not easy, and I hope that the proposals for peace, a ceasefire on all fronts and the freeing of hostages will be accepted immediately for the good of Palestinians and Israelis.

And let us not forget the tormented Ukrainian people who, the more they suffer, the more they long for peace. I greet this Ukrainian group with the flags who are over there. We are close to you! It is a desire, this desire for peace, so I encourage all efforts that are being made so that peace can be built as soon as possible, with international help. And let us not forget Myanmar.

I greet you, Romans and pilgrims from many countries, in particular the teachers from the "Saint John Paul II" Gymnasium in Kyiv, Ukraine – *Slava Isusu Khrystu!* (Praise be to Jesus Christ) – whom I encourage in their mission in this difficult and painful time. I greet the teachers and students of the "Cardenal Cisneros" diocesan school of the diocese of Sigüenza-Guadalajara in Spain, as well as the faithful of Assemini, Cagliari, the children of the "Giovanni Prati" School of Padua, and the young people from the parish of *Sant'Ireneo* of Rome.

I reiterate my greeting to the chorists who have come to Rome from all over the world to participate in the fourth International Meeting of Choirs. Dear friends, with your singing you will always be able to give glory to God and to transmit the joy of the Gospel!

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