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BIURO PRASOWE STOLICY APOSTOLSKIEJ دار الصحافة التابعة للكرسي الرسولي

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

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

Dear brothers and sisters, happy Sunday!

The Gospel of today's liturgy tells us about two miracles that seem to be intertwined. As Jesus is on his way to the house of Jairus, one of the leaders of the synagogue whose daughter is gravely ill, a woman afflicted with haemorrhages touches Jesus' cloak. He stops to heal her. Meanwhile, word arrives that Jairus' daughter has died, but Jesus does not stop. He reaches the house, enters the girl's room, takes her by the hand, and raises her, bringing her back to life (cf. *Mk 5:21-43*). Two miracles: a healing and a resurrection.

These two healings are told as a single event. Both occur through physical contact. Indeed, *the woman touches Jesus' cloak*, and Jesus *takes the girl by the hand*. Why is this 'touching' important? It is because these two women are considered impure — one because she suffers from blood loss and the other because she is dead — and therefore there could be no physical contact with them. Instead, *Jesus allows himself to be touched and is not afraid to touch*. Jesus allows himself to be touched and is not afraid to touch. Even before the physical healing, he challenges the false religious belief that God separates the pure to one side, and the impure to another. Instead, God does not make this kind of distinction, because we are all his children. Impurity does not come from food, illness, or even death; impurity comes from an impure heart.

Let us learn this: in the face of bodily and spiritual suffering, of the wounds in our souls, of situations that crush us, and even in the face of sin, God does not keep us at a distance. God is not ashamed of us; God does not judge us. On the contrary, he draws near to let himself be touched and to touch us, and he always raises us from death. He always takes us by the hand to say: daughter, son, arise! (cf. *Mk 5:41*). Walk forward; stride ahead! "Lord, I am a sinner" — "Stride ahead; I became sin for you, to save you" — "But you, O Lord, are not a

sinner” — “No, but I have endured all the consequences of sin to save you”. This is beautiful!

Let us fix in our hearts this image that Jesus gives us: God takes you by the hand and raises you up again. He lets himself be touched by your pain and touches you to heal you and give you life again. He does not discriminate against anyone because he loves everyone.

So, we can ask ourselves: do we believe that God is like this? Do we let ourselves be touched by the Lord, by his Word, by his love? Do we relate to our brothers and sisters by offering them a hand to lift them up, or do we keep our distance and label people based on our tastes and preferences? We label people. Let me ask you a question: Does God, the Lord Jesus, label people? Each person answer to themselves. Does God label people? And do I live by constantly labelling people?

Brothers and sisters, let us look to God’s heart, so that the Church and society may neither exclude anyone nor treat anyone as “impure”, so that each person, with their own story, is welcomed and loved without labels, without prejudices — loved without adjectives.

Let us ask the Holy Virgin. May she who is the Mother of tenderness intercede for us and for the whole world.

After the Angelus

Dear brothers and sisters, I greet you all, people of Rome and pilgrims from various countries!

I especially greet the children in the “*Misyjna Jutrzenka*” Missionary Circle from Skoczów, Poland; and the faithful from California and Costa Rica.

I greet the religious sisters of the Daughters of the Church who in these days, together with a group of laypeople, have been on a pilgrimage following in the footsteps of their founder, Venerable Maria Oliva Bonaldo. I also greet the young people from Gonzaga, near Mantua.

Today we remember the Roman Protomartyrs. We too live in a time of martyrdom, even more so than in the early centuries. Many of our brothers and sisters in various parts of the world suffer discrimination and persecution because of their faith; they thus make the Church fruitful. Others face martyrdom with “white gloves”. Let us support them and be inspired by their testimony of love for Christ.

On this last day of June, let us implore the Sacred Heart of Jesus to touch the hearts of those who desire war, that they may be converted to projects of dialogue and peace.

Brothers and sisters, let us not forget martyred Ukraine, Palestine, Israel, Myanmar, and many other places where there is so much suffering due to war!

I wish everyone a happy Sunday. Please, do not forget to pray for me. Enjoy your lunch. *Arrivederci!* Thank you.
