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The Pope's words at the Angelus prayer

At midday today, Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Holy Father Francis appeared at the window of his study in the Vatican Apostolic Palace to pray the Angelus with the approximately ten thousand 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!

Today we celebrate the Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. In the Gospel of the liturgy we contemplate the young girl of Nazareth who, having just received the Angel's announcement, sets out to visit her cousin.

This expression in the Gospel is beautiful: "Mary set out and went" (*Lk 1:39*). It means that Mary does not consider the news she received from the Angel a privilege but, on the contrary, she leaves home and sets out with the haste of someone who wishes to announce that joy to others and with the eagerness to be of service to her cousin. In reality, this first journey is a metaphor for her whole life, because from that moment on, Mary will always be on the move following Jesus as a disciple of the Kingdom. And, in the end, her earthly pilgrimage concludes with her Assumption into Heaven where, together with her Son, she enjoys the joy of eternal life forever.

Brothers and sisters, we must not imagine Mary "as a motionless wax statue," but in her we can see a "sister... with worn-out sandals... and with so much weariness" (C. Carretto, *Beata te che hai creduto*, Rome 1983, p. 13), for having followed the Lord and meeting brothers and sisters, concluding her journey in the glory of Heaven. In this way, the Blessed Virgin is She who goes before us on the journey, reminding us all that our life is also a continuous journey towards the horizon of the definitive encounter. Let us pray to Our Lady to help us on this

journey towards the encounter with the Lord.

After the Angelus

Dear brothers and sisters,

To Mary Queen of Peace, whom we contemplate today in the glory of Paradise, I would like once again to entrust the anxiety and sorrow of people in so many parts of the world who suffer from social tensions and wars. I am thinking in particular of martyred Ukraine, the Middle East, Palestine, Israel, Sudan and Myanmar. May our heavenly Mother obtain for all consolation and a future of serenity and harmony!

I continue to follow with concern the very serious humanitarian situation in Gaza, and I call once again for a ceasefire on all fronts, for the release of hostages, and for aid to the exhausted population. I encourage everyone to make every effort to ensure that the conflict does not escalate and to pursue paths of negotiation so that this tragedy ends soon! Let us not forget: war is a defeat.

My thoughts now turn to Greece, which in recent days has been battling a devastating fire that broke out north-east of Athens. Tens of thousands have already been evacuated, many families have been left homeless, thousands of people are facing terrible hardship and, in addition to the immense material damage, an environmental disaster is being created. I pray for the victims and the injured, I assure my closeness to all those who are suffering from this serious situation, trusting that they can be helped with common solidarity.

And I greet all of you, Romans and pilgrims from different countries, in particular, the AGESCI Scouts of Cornedo Vicentino, and the young people of the Immacolata. I thank you for your presence. I wish you a happy feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. And, please, my brothers and sisters, do not forget to pray for me. Have a good lunch and arrivederci!
