



SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE BOLLETTINO

HOLY SEE PRESS OFFICE BUREAU DE PRESSE DU SAINT-SIÈGE PRESSEAMT DES HEILIGEN STUHL
OFICINA DE PRENSA DE LA SANTA SEDE SALA DE IMPRENSA DA SANTA SÉ
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N. 240915a

Sunday 15.09.2024

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 gathered 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 that Jesus, after asking the disciples what the people thought of Him, directly asks them: "But who do you say that I am?" (*Mk 8:29*). Peter answers on behalf of all the group, saying, "You are the Christ" (v. 30), that is, you are the Messiah. However, when Jesus starts to talk about the suffering and death that await Him, the same Peter objects, and Jesus harshly rebukes him: "Get behind me, Satan!" – He says Satan – For you are not on the side of God, but of men" (v. 33).

Looking at the attitude of the apostle Peter, we too can ask ourselves what it means to truly *know Jesus*. What does it mean to know Jesus?

In fact, on the one hand Peter answers perfectly, saying to Jesus that He is the Christ. However, behind these correct words there is still a way of thinking that is "of men", a mentality that imagines a strong Messiah, a victorious Messiah, who cannot suffer or die. So, the words with which Peter responds are "right", but his way of thinking has not changed. He still has to change his mindset, he still has to convert.

And this is a message, an important message for us too. Indeed, we too have learned something about God, we know the doctrine, we recite the prayers correctly and, perhaps, we respond well to the question "Who is Jesus for you?", with some formula we learned at catechism. But are we sure that this means really knowing Jesus? In reality, to know the Lord, it is not enough to know something about Him, but rather to follow Him, to let oneself be touched and changed by His Gospel. It is a matter of having a relationship with Him, an encounter. I can know many things about Jesus, but if I have not encountered Him, I still do not know who Jesus is. It takes this

encounter that changes life: it changes the way of being, it changes the way of thinking, it changes the relationships you have with your brothers and sisters, the willingness to accept and forgive, it changes the choices you make in life. Everything changes if you have truly come to know Jesus! Everything changes.

Brothers and sisters, the Lutheran theologian and pastor Bonhoeffer, victim of Nazism, wrote: "What is bothering me incessantly is the question of what Christianity really is, or indeed who Christ really is, for us today" (Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Letters and papers from prison*). Unfortunately, many people no longer pose themselves this question and remain "unbothered", slumbering, even far from God. Instead, it is important to ask ourselves: do I let myself be bothered, do I ask who Jesus is for me, and what place He occupies in my life? Do I follow Jesus only in word, continuing to have a worldly mentality, or do I set out to follow Him, allowing the encounter with Him to transform my life?

May our mother Mary, who knew Jesus well, help us on this question.

After the Angelus

Dear brothers and sisters,

I express my closeness to the populations of Vietnam and Myanmar, who are suffering as a result of the floods caused by a violent typhoon. I pray for the deceased, the injured and the displaced. May God sustain those who have lost their loved ones and their home, and bless those who are coming to their aid.

Yesterday, Moisés Lira Seraphin was beatified in Mexico City. A priest and founder of the Congregation of the Missionaries of Charity of Mary Immaculate, he died in 1950, after a life spent helping people to advance in faith and in love of the Lord. May his apostolic zeal encourage priests to give themselves unreservedly, for the spiritual good of the holy people of God. A round of applause for the new Blessed! I can see the Mexican flags over there...

Today marks World Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis Day in Italy. I assure remembrance in prayer for sufferers and their families; I encourage research work on this pathology, and volunteer associations.

And let us not forget the wars that are causing bloodshed in the world. I think of tormented Ukraine, Myanmar, I think of the Middle East. How many innocent victims. I think of the mothers who have lost their sons in war. How many young lives cut short! I think of Hersh Goldberg-Polin, found dead in September, along with five other hostages in Gaza. In November last year, I met his mother, Rachel, who impressed me with her humanity. I accompany her in this moment. May the conflict in Palestine and Israel cease! May the violence cease! May hatred cease! Let the hostages be released, let the negotiations continue, and let peaceful solutions be found!

I greet you all, Romans and pilgrims from Italy and many countries. In particular, the faithful of the parish of Saint Queen Jadwiga in Radom, Poland; the group of Jesuit priests who have come to Rome to study; the students of Stade, Germany, and participants in the relay walk from Rome to Assisi. And I greet the young people of the *Immacolata*, who have had three ordinations in these days: congratulations!

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