



The Holy See

POPE FRANCIS

ANGELUS

*Saint Peter's Square
Sunday, 3 February 2019*

[Multimedia]

Dear Brothers and Sisters, Good morning!

Last Sunday the liturgy proposed to us the episode of the Synagogue of Nazareth, where Jesus reads a passage from the prophet Isaiah and in the end reveals that those words are fulfilled “today”, in Him. Jesus presents himself as the one on whom the Spirit of the Lord has rested, the Holy Spirit who consecrated him and sent him to carry out the mission of salvation for the benefit of humanity. Today’s Gospel (cf. Lk 4:21-30) is the continuation of that narrative and shows us the astonishment of his fellow citizens in seeing that someone from their country, “Joseph’s son” (v. 22), claims to be the Christ, the Father’s envoy.

Jesus, with his ability to penetrate minds and hearts, immediately understands what his fellow countrymen think. They believe that, since he is one of them, he must demonstrate his strange “claim” by working miracles there, in Nazareth, as he did in neighbouring countries (cf. v. 23). But Jesus does not want and cannot accept this logic, because it does not correspond to God’s plan: God wants *faith*, they want *miracles, signs*; God wants *to save everyone*, and they want a Messiah for *their own benefit*. And to explain the logic of God, Jesus gives the example of two great ancient prophets: Elijah and Elisha, whom God had sent to heal and save non-Hebrew people, and other peoples, but who had trusted in his word.

Faced with this invitation to open their hearts to the *gratuitousness* and *universality* of salvation, the citizens of Nazareth rebelled, and even assumed an aggressive attitude, which degenerated to the point that “they rose up and put him out of the city, and led him to the brow of the hill [...], that they might throw him down” (v. 29). The initial admiration turned into aggression, a rebellion

against him.

And this Gospel passage shows us that Jesus' public ministry begins with a rejection and with a death threat, paradoxically precisely on the part of his fellow citizens. Jesus, in living the mission entrusted to him by the Father, knows well that he must face fatigue, rejection, persecution and defeat. A price that, yesterday as today, authentic prophecy is called to pay. The harsh rejection, however, does not discourage Jesus, nor does it stop the journey and the fruitfulness of his prophetic action. He goes ahead on his way (cf. v. 30), trusting in the Father's love.

Today too, the world needs to see *prophets* in the Lord's disciples, that is, people who are courageous and persevere in responding to the Christian vocation. People who follow the "drive" of the Holy Spirit, who sends them to proclaim hope and salvation to the poor and the excluded; people who follow the logic of faith and not of miraculism; people dedicated to the service of all, without privileges and exclusion. In short: people who are ready to welcome the Father's will within them and undertake to witness to it faithfully to others.

Let us pray to Mary Most Holy, that we may grow and walk with the same apostolic zeal for the Kingdom of God that inspired Jesus' mission.

After the Angelus the Holy Father continued:

Dear brothers and sisters, with great concern I am following the humanitarian crisis in Yemen. The population is exhausted by the long conflict and a great many children are suffering from hunger, but it is not possible to gain access to the food stores. Brothers and sisters, the cry of these children and their parents rises before God. I appeal to the parties concerned and to the international community to promote without delay the observance of the Agreements reached, to ensure the distribution of food and to work for the good of the population. I invite everyone to pray for our brothers and sisters in Yemen. "*Hail Mary ...*". Let us pray earnestly, because they are children who are hungry, thirsty, without medicine and in mortal danger. Let us take this thought home with us.

Today in Italy we are celebrating Pro-Life Day, which has as its theme "It is life, it is future". I join in the Bishops' Message and I express my encouragement to the ecclesial communities that in many ways promote and support life. The necessity is increasing for a concrete commitment to promote births, which involves institutions and the various cultural and social organizations, recognizing the family as the generative womb of society.

This coming 5 February, in the Far East and in various parts of the world, millions of men and women will celebrate the Lunar New Year. I would like to greet all of them cordially, wishing that in their families they may practice those virtues which help them to live in peace with themselves,

with others and with creation. I invite prayer for the gift of peace, to be welcomed and nurtured with each one's contribution.

I greet all of you, people of Rome and pilgrims. In particular, the faithful from Croatia and Poland; those from Lecce, Potenza, Cerignola, San Benedetto del Tronto and Castelliri. I greet the Sister Disciples of the Divine Master and the parish choir from Claut, Pordenone.

With great affection I greet the boys and girls of Catholic Action of the Diocese of Rome. Dear young people, I am happy to welcome you, together with the Cardinal Vicar, the assistant priests, your parents and teachers, at the conclusion of the "Caravan of Peace". With this initiative you have opened the celebrations for the 150th anniversary of the foundation of Catholic Action in Rome and the 50th anniversary of the birth of acr (Youth Catholic Action). I wish that you may be joyful witnesses to peace and fraternity. Now let us listen together to the message that your friends, here beside me, will read to us.

[Reading of the message]

And now the balloons will rise skyward, a symbol of our prayers for world peace.

[Release of balloons]

In less than an hour I will depart for a brief but important trip to the United Arab Emirates. Please accompany me with your prayers. Happy Sunday to all. Enjoy your lunch! *Arrivederci!*