



The Holy See

POPE FRANCIS

ANGELUS

Saint Peter's Square
Sunday, 27 February 2022

[Multimedia]

Dear brothers and sisters, *buongiorno!*

In the Gospel of today's Liturgy, Jesus invites us to reflect on the way we look and the way we speak. Our gaze and our speech.

First of all, our *gaze*. The risk we run, the Lord says, is that we concentrate on looking at the speck in our brother's eye without noticing the log that is in our own [eye] (cf. Lk 6:41). In other words, being very attentive to the faults of others, even those as small as a speck, serenely overlooking our own, according them little weight. What Jesus says is true: we always find reasons for blaming others and justifying ourselves. And very often we complain about things that are wrong in society, in the Church, in the world, without first questioning ourselves and without making an effort to change, first of all ourselves. Every fruitful, positive change must begin from ourselves. Otherwise, there will be no change. But, Jesus explains that by doing this, our gaze is blind. And if we are blind, we cannot claim to be guides and teachers for others: indeed, a blind person cannot lead another blind person, says the Lord (cf. v. 39).

Dear brothers and sisters, the Lord invites us *to clean up our gaze*. He first asks us to look within ourselves to recognize our failings because if we are not capable of seeing our own defects, we will always be inclined to magnify those of others. If instead we acknowledge our own mistakes and our own flaws, the door of mercy opens up to us. And after looking within ourselves, Jesus invites us to look at others as he does — this is the secret, to look at others as he does — who

does not look at evil first but at goodness. God looks at us in this way: he does not see irredeemable errors in us, but rather he sees children who make mistakes. It is a change in outlook: he does not focus on the mistakes, but on the children who make mistakes. God always distinguishes the person from his errors. He always saves the person. He always believes in the person and is always ready to forgive errors. We know that God always forgives. And he invites us to do likewise: not to look for evil in others, but the good.

After our gaze, today Jesus invites us to reflect on our *speech*. The Lord explains that “out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks” (v. 45). It is true, from the way a person speaks, you can tell straight away what is in their heart. The words we use say who we are. At times, though, we pay scarce attention to our words and we use them superficially. But words carry weight: they enable us to express thoughts and feelings, to give voice to the fears we have and the plans we intend to realize, to bless God and others. Unfortunately, however, through our tongue we can also feed prejudices, raise barriers, attack and even destroy; we can destroy our brothers and sisters with our words. Gossip hurts and slander can be sharper than a knife! These days, especially in the digital world, words travel fast; but too many of them convey anger and aggression, feed false news and take advantage of collective fears to propagate distorted ideas. A diplomat, who was Secretary General of the United Nations, and was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, said that “to misuse the word is to show contempt for man” (D. Hammarskjöld, *Markings*, 1955, 112).

Let us then ask ourselves what type of words we use: words that express care, respect, understanding, closeness, compassion, or words that aim mainly to make us look good in front of others? And then, do we speak mildly or do we pollute the world by spreading venom: criticizing, complaining, feeding widespread aggression?

May Our Lady, Mary, whose humility was seen by God, Virgin of silence to whom we now pray, help us purify our gaze and our speech.

After the Angelus

Dear brothers and sisters, in recent days we have been shaken by something tragic: war. Several times we have prayed that this road would not be taken. And let us not stop praying; indeed, let us implore God more intensely. For this reason, I renew to all the invitation to make 2 March, Ash Wednesday, a day of prayer and fasting for peace in Ukraine. A day to be close to the sufferings of the Ukrainian people, to feel that we are all brothers and sisters, and to implore God for the end of the war.

Those who wage war, those who provoke war, forget humanity. They do not start from the people,

they do not look at the real life of people, but place partisan interests and power before all else. They trust in the diabolical and perverse logic of weapons, which is the furthest from the will of God. And they distance themselves from ordinary people, who want peace, and who are the real victims in every conflict, who pay for the follies of war with their own skin. I think of the elderly, of those who are seeking refuge in these hours, of mothers fleeing with their children... They are brothers and sisters for whom it is urgent to open humanitarian corridors, and who should be welcomed.

With a heart broken by what is happening in Ukraine — and let us not forget the wars in other parts of the world, such as in Yemen, in Syria, in Ethiopia... — I repeat: Silence all weapons! God is with the peacemakers, not with those who use violence. Because those who love peace, as the Italian Constitution states, reject “war as an instrument of aggression against the freedom of other peoples and as a means for the settlement of international disputes”.

Yesterday, the priest Gaetano Giménez Martín and 15 companion martyrs, killed in *odium fidei* during the religious persecution of the 1930s in Spain, were proclaimed blessed in Granada, Spain. May the witness of these heroic disciples of Christ inspire in everyone the desire to serve the Gospel with fidelity and courage. A round of applause for the new Blessed!

I greet you all, people of Rome and pilgrims.

I greet in particular *las niñas Quinceñeras* of Panama, the young university students from the Diocese of Porto, the faithful from Mérida-Badajoz and from Madrid, Spain, those from Paris and Poland, the groups from Reggio Calabria, Sicily and the Alta Langa pastoral unit, confirmands from Ugnano and the young people from Petosino, in the Diocese of Bergamo.

A special greeting goes to those who have come on the occasion of Rare Disease Day, which takes place tomorrow. I encourage the various Associations of the sick and their families, along with the researchers who work in this field. I am close to you! I greet the peoples present here today... I also see many Ukrainian flags! [In Ukrainian]: *Praised be Jesus Christ*.

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