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The Pope's words at the Angelus prayer

Before the Angelus

After the Angelus

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 faithful and pilgrims gathered in Saint Peter's Square.

The following is the Pope's introduction to the Marian prayer:

Before the Angelus

Dear brothers and sisters, good morning!

This Sunday's Gospel (cf. *Mk* 5: 21-43) presents two prodigies worked by Jesus, describing them as a sort of triumphal march towards life.

First, the Evangelist tells of a certain Jairus, one of the synagogue leaders, who comes to Jesus and begs Him to go to his house because his twelve-year-old daughter is dying. Jesus accepts and goes with him; but, along the way they receive the news that the girl is dead. We can imagine that father's reaction. But Jesus tells him: "Do not be afraid, *just believe!*" (v. 36). Upon arriving at Jairus' house, Jesus sends out those who had been weeping – there were also the women who were screaming loudly – and enters the room only with the parents and the three disciples. Addressing the deceased, He says: «Little girl, I say to you: get up!» (v.41). And immediately the girl gets up, as if waking up from a deep sleep (v. 42).

Within the story of this miracle, Mark inserts another: the healing of a woman who suffered from bleeding and was healed as soon as she touched Jesus' mantle (v. 27). Here the striking fact is that the faith of this woman

attracts – I want to say “steals” – the divine saving power that is in Christ Who, feeling that a force “had come out of Him”, tries to understand who it was. And when the woman, with so much shame, comes forward and confesses everything, He tells her: ‘Daughter, *your faith* has saved you’ (v.34).

These are two interlocking stories, with a single centre: *faith*; and they show Jesus as the source of life, as the One who gives back life to those who trust Him fully. The two protagonists, the father of the girl and the sick woman, are not disciples of Jesus and yet they are restored because of their faith. They have faith in that man. From this, we understand that all are admitted on the path of the Lord: no one should feel like an intruder, an unlawful person or one without rights. To have access to His heart, to Jesus’ heart, there is just one prerequisite: to feel in need of healing and to entrust oneself to Him. I ask you: does each one of you feel in need of healing? Of something, some sin, some problem? And, if you hear this, do you have faith in Jesus? These are the two requirements to be healed, to have access to His heart: to feel oneself in need of healing and to entrust oneself to Him. Jesus goes in search of these people in the crowd and takes them out of their anonymity, freeing them from the fear of living and daring. He does so with a look and with a word that puts them on back the right path again after much suffering and humiliation. We too are called to learn and to imitate these words that liberate, and these looks that restore the desire to live to those who are without it.

In this Gospel reading, the themes of *faith* and *new life*, that Jesus came to offer everyone, are intertwined. Entering the house where the girl lies dead, He drives out those who are agitating and lamenting (v.40) and says: “The child is not dead, she is asleep” (v. 39). Jesus is the Lord, and before Him, physical death is like a sleep: there is no reason to despair. Another death to be afraid of is that of the heart hardened by evil! Yes, we must be afraid of that! When we feel we have hardened hearts, a heart that is hardening and, if I may say so, a mummified heart, then we must be afraid of this. This is the death of the heart. But even sin, even the mummified heart, is never the last word for Jesus, because He has brought us the infinite mercy of the Father. And even if we have fallen down, His soft and strong voice reaches us: “I tell you: get up!” It is beautiful to hear that word of Jesus addressed to each one of us: “I tell you: stand up! Go. Stand up, be brave, get up!” And Jesus restores the girl to life and gives life back to the healed woman: life and faith to both.

Let us ask the Virgin Mary to accompany our journey of faith and concrete love, especially towards those in need. And let us invoke her maternal intercession for our brothers who suffer in body and spirit.

After the Angelus

Dear brothers and sisters,

Renewing my prayer for the beloved people of Nicaragua, I wish to join in the efforts being made by the bishops of the country and many people of good will, in their role of mediation and witness for the process of national dialogue that is underway, on the road to democracy.

The situation in Syria remains grave, especially in the province of Daraa, where in the military action of these recent days, schools and hospitals have been struck, causing thousands of new refugees. I renew, together with prayer, my appeal that the population, already harshly tried for years, may be spared further suffering.

In the midst of so many conflicts, it is my duty to indicate an initiative that may be defined as historic – and it can also be said that it is good news: in these days, after twenty years, the governments of Ethiopia and Eritrea have returned to speaking about peace. May this encounter ignite a light of hope for these two countries of the Horn of Africa and for the entire African continent.

I assure my prayer also for the young people missing for more than a week in an underground cave in Thailand.

Next Saturday I will visit Bari, along with many Heads of Churches and Christian communities of the Middle

East. We will spend a day of prayer and reflection on the ever dramatic situation of that region, where so many of our brothers and sisters in faith continue to suffer, and we implore with one voice: "May peace be upon you!" (*Psalm 122: 8*). I ask you all to accompany with prayer this pilgrimage of peace and unity.

I greet you all, Romans and pilgrims. In particular, I greet the faithful from Portugal and priests from the *Sacerdos* Institute of the Pontifical *Regina Apostolorum* Athenaeum, as well as the Franciscan Sisters of Penance and Christian Charity of Poland, and the faithful of Iraq.

I greet the parish groups and associations; the Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of the Apostles, the group of very young people from the pastoral unit of Gallio, the diocese of Padua, young confirmands from the *Maria Himmelfahrt in Schattdorf* parish and the spiritual family of the Most Precious Blood of Christ, to which the month of July is specially dedicated.

I wish you all a good Sunday. Please do not forget to pray for me. Have a good lunch and goodbye!
