

HOLY SEE PRESS OFFICE
OFICINA DE PRENSA DE LA SANTA SEDE



BUREAU DE PRESSE DU SAINT-SIEGE
PRESSEAMT DES HEILIGEN STUHLIS

BOLLETTINO

SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE

N. 190106c

Sunday 06.01.2019

The Pope's words at the Angelus prayer

Before the Angelus

After the Angelus

Following Holy Mass in the Vatican Basilica for the Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord, 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!

Today, Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord, is the feast of the manifestation of Jesus, symbolized by light. In the prophetic texts this light is *promised*: the light is promised. Indeed, Isaiah addresses Jerusalem with these words: "Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you" (60:1). The prophet's invitation — to arise for the light is coming — seems surprising, because it is placed after the harsh exile and the numerous vexations that the people had experienced.

This invitation resonates today for us too, we who have celebrated Jesus' birth, and it encourages us to allow ourselves to be reached by the light of Bethlehem. We are also invited not to stop at the exterior signs of the event, but to set out from it again to follow in newness of life our path as men and believers.

The light that the prophet Isaiah had foretold *is present and encountered* in the Gospel. And Jesus, born in Bethlehem, city of David, came to bring salvation to those near and far. The evangelist Matthew shows different

ways in which one can encounter Christ and react to His presence. For example, Herod and the Scribes of Jerusalem are hard of heart, which is obstinate and rejects the visitation of that Child. It is a possibility: closing oneself to the light. They represent those, in our days also, who are *afraid* of Jesus' coming and close their heart to brothers and sisters who are in need of help. Herod is afraid of losing power and does not think of the true good of the people, but rather of his personal benefit. The Scribes and the leaders of the people are afraid because they are unable to look beyond their own certainties, and are thus unable to receive the newness that is in Jesus.

Instead, the experience of the Magi is very different (cf. *Mt 2: 1-12*). Coming from the East, they represent all peoples far from the traditional Jewish faith. Yet they allow themselves to be guided by the star and face a long and risky journey to arrive at their destination and to know the truth of the Messiah. The Magi were *open* to "novelty," and to them was revealed the greatest and most surprising novelty of history: God made man. The Magi prostrated themselves before Jesus and offered Him symbolic gifts: gold, frankincense, and myrrh, because the search for the Lord implies not only perseverance on the way, but also generosity of heart. And, finally, they returned "to their own country" (v. 12); and the Gospel says they returned "by another way." Brothers and sisters, every time that a man or a woman encounters Jesus, he/she changes his/her way and returns to life in a different way, returns renewed, "by another way." They returned "to their country" bearing within them the mystery of that humble and poor King. We can imagine what they told everyone of the experience they lived: the salvation offered by God in Christ is for all men, near and far. It's not possible to "take possession" of that Child: He is a gift for all.

We also must silence our heart somewhat and let ourselves to be illumined by the light of Christ from Bethlehem. We must not let our fears close our heart, but have the courage to open ourselves to this light which is gentle and discreet. Then, like the Magi, we will experience "a very great joy" (v. 10), which we will not be able to keep to ourselves. May we be supported on the way by the Virgin Mary, the Star that leads us to Jesus, and Mother who lets Jesus be seen by the Magi and all those who approach her.

After the Angelus

Dear brothers and sisters,

For several days, forty-nine people saved in the Mediterranean Sea have been on board two ships of an NGO, in search of a safe port where they can disembark. I address a heartfelt appeal to European leaders to show concrete solidarity towards these people.

Some oriental Churches, Catholic and Orthodox, who follow the Julian calendar, celebrate the Holy Nativity tomorrow. To them I address my warm and fraternal wishes in a sign of communion between all us Christians who recognize Jesus as the Lord and Saviour. To all of them, happy Christmas!

The Epiphany is also Youth Mission Day, which this year invites these very young missionaries to be "athletes of Jesus", to bear witness to the Gospel in the family, at school and in places of leisure.

I extend my cordial greeting to all of you, individual pilgrims, families, parishes and associations, from Italy and from different countries. In particular I greet the faithful of Marsala, Peveragno and San Martino in Rio, young confirmands from Bonate Sotto and the group "*Fraterna Domus*".

A special greeting to the historical-folkloric procession that promotes the values of the Epiphany and that this year is dedicated to the territory of Abruzzo. I would also like to mention the procession of the Magi that takes place in many cities of Poland with widespread participation on the part of families and associations. And I also greet the musicians of the band I heard playing! Continue to play the joy of this day of the Epiphany.

I wish a good feast day to you all. And please, do not forget to pray for me. Have a good lunch, and goodbye!
