

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. 200628a

Sunday 28.06.2020

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 faithful and pilgrims gathered in St. Peter's Square.

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

Before the Angelus

Dear brothers and sisters, good day!

This Sunday's Gospel (cfr *Mt* 10:37-42) forcefully echoes the invitation to live out our union with the Lord completely and without hesitation. Jesus asks His disciples to take the demands of the Gospel seriously, even when that requires sacrifice and effort.

The first demanding request that He addresses to those who follow Him is that of putting love for Him above family affection. He says: "Whoever loves father or mother [...] son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me" (v. 37). Jesus certainly does not intend to undervalue love for parents and children, but He knows that family bonds, if put in first place, can deviate from the true good. We see this: some forms of corruption in governments come about precisely because love for the family is greater than love for one's country, and so they place family members in office. The same with Jesus: when love is greater than Him, it is not good. All of us can give many examples in this regard, not to mention those situations in which family affections are intermingled with choices that are contrary to the Gospel. When, instead, love toward parents and children is inspired and purified by love for the Lord, it then becomes totally fruitful and produces fruit for the good of the family itself as well as beyond it. Jesus says this phrase with this meaning. Also, let us remember how Jesus rebukes the doctors of the law who cause their parents to lack what is necessary to them on the pretext of giving it to the altar, of giving it to the Church. He reproaches them! The true love of Jesus requires a true love of parents and children, but to seek out family interests first always leads to the wrong path.

Then, Jesus says to His disciples: "Whoever does not take up his cross and follow after me is not worthy of me" (v. 28). This means following Him along the path that He Himself trod, without looking for shortcuts. There is no true love without the cross, that is, without a personal price to pay. And many mothers, many fathers who sacrifice many things to their child, and bear true sacrifices, crosses, but because they love them. And when borne with Jesus, the cross is not scary because He is always at our side to support us in the hour of the most difficult trial, to give us strength and courage. Nor is it necessary to get agitated to preserve one's own life through fearful or egotistical behaviour. Jesus admonishes:

"Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it" - that is, for love, for love of Jesus, love for one's neighbour, for service towards others (v. 39). This is the Gospel paradox. But even regarding this, we have many, many examples, thank God! We see it in these days, how many people, how many people, are bearing crosses to help others, they sacrifice themselves to help others who are in need in this pandemic. ... But, always with Jesus, it can be done. The fullness of life and joy is found by giving oneself for the Gospel and for others, through openness, welcoming and goodness.

In so doing, we can experience God's generosity and gratitude. Jesus reminds us of this: "Whoever receives you receives me [...] Whoever gives only a cup of cold water to one of these little ones [...] will surely not lose his reward" (vv. 40-42). God's generous gratitude takes into account even the smallest gesture of love and service given to our brothers and sisters. Again in these days, I heard from a priest who was moved because in his parish a child came up to him and said, "Father, these are my savings; not very much. They are for the poor, for those who are in need because of the pandemic". A little thing, but a great thing. It is a contagious gratitude that helps every one of us to be grateful toward those who take care of our needs. When someone offers us some service, we should not think that we deserve everything. No. Many services are carried out freely. Think of volunteer work, which is one of the greatest things about Italian society. Volunteers ... and how many of them have lost their lives in this pandemic. They do it out of love, simply to serve. Gratitude, appreciation is, first of all, good manners, but it is also characteristic of a Christian. It is a simple but genuine sign of the kingdom of God which is the kingdom of gratuitous and grateful love.

May Mary Most Holy, who loved Jesus more than life itself and who followed Him even to the cross, help us to always put ourselves before God with willing hearts, allowing His Word to judge our behaviour and our choices.

After the Angelus

Dear brothers and sisters,

Next Tuesday, 30 June, the Fourth Conference of the European Union and the United Nations to "support the future of Syria and the region" will take place. Let us pray for this important meeting, so that it may improve the dramatic situation of the Syrian people and neighbouring peoples, particularly Lebanon, in the context of serious socio-political and economic crises that have been made even more difficult by the pandemic. Think of the fact that there are small children who are hungry, who do not have anything to eat. Please, may the leaders be capable of making peace.

I also invite everyone to pray for the population of Yemen, especially the children, who are suffering as a result of the very serious humanitarian crisis, and for those affected by the severe floods in Western Ukraine: may they experience the comfort of the Lord and the help of their brethren.

I address my greeting to you all, those of you from Rome and pilgrims from Italy and from other countries. I can see German, Polish flags and so many others. In particular, I greet those who attended the Mass in Congolese rite this morning in Rome, praying for the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The Congolese people are wonderful.

I wish you all a good Sunday. Please, do not forget to pray for me. Have a good lunch! And I will see you tomorrow for the feast of Saints Peter and Paul.
