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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 Saint Peter's Square.

The following are the Pope's words of introduction to the Marian prayer:

Before the Angelus

Dear brothers and sisters, *buongiorno!*

Today, in Italy and in other countries, we celebrate the Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ. The Gospel presents us the narrative of the Last Supper (Mk 14:12-16, 22-26). The words and gestures of the Lord touch our hearts: He takes the bread in his hands, pronounces the blessing, breaks it and offers it to the disciples, saying: "Take; this is my body" (v. 22).

And thus, with simplicity, Jesus gives us the greatest sacrament. His is a humble gesture of giving, a gesture of sharing. At the culmination of his life, he does not distribute an abundance of bread to feed the multitudes, but he splits himself apart at the Passover supper with the disciples. In this way Jesus shows us that the aim of life lies in self-giving, that the greatest thing is to serve. And today once more we find the greatness of God in a piece of Bread, in a fragility that overflows with love, overflows with sharing. *Fragility* is precisely the word I would like to underscore. Jesus becomes fragile like the bread that is broken and crumbled. But his strength lies precisely therein, in his fragility. *In the Eucharist fragility is strength*: the strength of the love that becomes small so it can be welcomed and not feared; the strength of the love that is broken and shared so as to nourish and give life; the strength of the love that is split apart so as to join us in unity.

And there is another strength that stands out in the fragility of the Eucharist: the strength to love those who make mistakes. It is *on the night he is betrayed* that Jesus gives us the Bread of Life. He gives us the greatest gift while in his heart he feels the deepest abyss: the disciple who eats with Him, who dips the morsel in the same

plate, is betraying Him. And betrayal is the worst suffering for one who loves. And what does Jesus do? He reacts to the evil with a greater good. He responds to Judas' 'no' with the 'yes' of mercy. He does not punish the sinner, but rather gives His life for him; He pays for him. When we receive the Eucharist, Jesus does the same with us: he knows us; he knows we are sinners; he knows we make many mistakes, but he does not give up on joining his life to ours. He knows that we need it, because the Eucharist is not the reward of saints, but *the Bread of sinners*. This is why he exhorts us: "Do not be afraid! *Take and eat*".

Each time we receive the Bread of Life, Jesus comes to give new meaning to our fragilities. He reminds us that in his eyes we are more precious than we think. He tells us he is pleased if we share our fragilities with him. He repeats to us that his mercy is not afraid of our miseries. And above all he heals us with love from those fragilities that we cannot heal on our own. What fragilities? Let's think. That of feeling resentment toward those who have done us harm – we cannot heal from this on our own; that of distancing ourselves from others and closing off within ourselves – we cannot heal from that on our own; that of feeling sorry for ourselves and lamenting without finding peace; from this too, we cannot heal on our own. It is He who heals us with his presence, with his bread, with the Eucharist. The Eucharist is an effective medicine for these closures. The Bread of Life, indeed, heals rigidity and transforms it into docility. The Eucharist heals because it joins with Jesus: it makes us assimilate his way of living, his ability to break himself apart and give himself to brothers and sisters, to respond to evil with good. He gives us the courage to go outside of ourselves and bend down with love toward the fragility of others. As God does with us. This is the logic of the Eucharist: we receive Jesus who loves us and heals our fragilities in order to love others and help them in their fragilities; and this lasts our entire life. Today in the Liturgy of the Hours we prayed a hymn: four verses that are the summary of Jesus' entire life. And thus they tell us that as Jesus was born, he became our travelling companion in life. Then, at the supper he gave himself as food. Then, on the cross, in his death, he became the price: he paid for us. And now, as he reigns in Heaven he is our reward; we go to seek the One who awaits us [cf. Hymn at Lauds on Corpus Christi, *Verbum Supernum Prodiens*].

May the Blessed Virgin, in whom God became flesh, help us to embrace with a grateful heart the gift of the Eucharist and to make a gift of our life too. May the Eucharist make us a gift for all others.

After the Angelus

With sorrow I follow the news from Canada about the shocking discovery of the remains of two hundred and fifteen children, pupils at the Kamloops Indian Residential School in the Province of British Columbia. I join the Canadian Bishops and the whole Catholic Church in Canada in expressing my closeness to the Canadian people, who have been traumatized by this shocking news. This sad discovery further heightens awareness of the pain and sufferings of the past. May the political and religious authorities in Canada continue to work together with determination to shed light on this sad event and humbly commit themselves to a path of healing and reconciliation. These difficult times are a strong call for everyone to turn away from the colonial model and also from the ideological colonizations of the present, and walk side by side in dialogue, mutual respect and recognition of the rights and cultural values of all the daughters and sons of Canada. We commend to the Lord the souls of all the children who have died in the Canadian residential schools, and we pray for the grief-stricken indigenous families and communities of Canada.

I wish to assure my prayers for the victims of the bloodshed committed the night between Friday and Saturday in a town of Burkina Faso. I am close to the family members and to the entire Burkinabé population that is suffering a great deal due to these repeated attacks. Africa needs peace and not violence!

Today in Chiavenna, in the Diocese of Como, Sr Maria Laura Mainetti is being beatified. She was killed 21 years ago by three young women influenced by a satanic sect. Cruelty. She who loved young people more than anything, and who loved and forgave those same girls imprisoned by evil, leaves us her programme for life: do every little thing with faith, love and enthusiasm. May the Lord give all of us faith, love and enthusiasm. A round of applause for the new Blessed!

The day after tomorrow, Tuesday, 8 June, at 1:00 p.m., International Catholic Action is calling for the dedication of one minute for peace, each according to his or her own religious tradition. Let us pray in particular for the Holy Land and for Myanmar.

I cordially greet all of you, those from Rome, from Italy and from other countries. In particular, I greet the young people of the Turin Contact Project and the Devotee Group of Our Lady of Miracles of Corbetta, the families of Cerignola and the Italian Itinerant Association, with numerous carnival workers and street artists. Thank you very much for the gifts you have brought. And I also greet the people of Salento in southern Apulia who are dancing "La Pizzica" there! Well done! I wish everyone a happy Sunday.

Please, do not forget to pray for me. Enjoy your lunch! *Arrivederci!*
