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The Pope's words at the Angelus prayer

At midday today, third Sunday of Ordinary Time, 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!*

In the Gospel of today's liturgy, we see Jesus beginning his preaching (cf. *Lk* 4:14-21): it is Jesus' first sermon. He goes to Nazareth, where he grew up, and participates in prayer in the synagogue. He gets up to read and, in the scroll of the prophet Isaiah, he finds the passage regarding the Messiah, who proclaims a message of consolation and liberation for the poor and oppressed (cf. *Is* 61:1-2). At the end of the reading, "the eyes of all... were fixed on him" (v. 20). And Jesus begins by saying: "Today this scripture has been fulfilled" (v. 21). Let us dwell on this today. It is the first word of Jesus' preaching recorded in the Gospel of Luke. Pronounced by the Lord, it indicates a "today" that runs through all ages and always remains valid. The Word of God is always "today". It begins with a "today": when you read the Word of God, a "today" begins in your soul, if you understand it well. Today. Isaiah's prophecy dates back centuries, but Jesus, "in the power of the Spirit" (v. 14), makes it relevant and, above all, brings it to fulfilment, and shows how to receive the Word of God: today. It is not like ancient history, no: today. Today, it speaks to your heart.

Jesus' fellow countrymen are struck by his word. Although, clouded by prejudice, they do not believe him, they realize that his teaching is different from that of the other teachers (cf. v. 22): they sense that there is more to Jesus. What is there? There is *the anointing of the Holy Spirit*. Sometimes it happens that our sermons and our teachings remain generic, abstract; they do not touch the soul and the life of the people. And why? Because they lack the power of this *today*; what Jesus "fills with meaning" by the power of the Spirit, is today. *Today* is speaking to you. Yes, at times one hears impeccable conferences, well-constructed speeches, but they do not

move the heart and so everything remains as before. Even many homilies – I say it with respect but with pain – are abstract, and instead of awakening the soul, they put it to sleep. When the faithful start looking at their watches – “when is this going to end?” – they put the soul to sleep. Preaching runs this risk: without the anointing of the Spirit, it impoverishes the Word of God, and descends to moralism and abstract concepts; it presents the Gospel with detachment, as if it were outside time, far from reality. And this is not the way. But a word in which *the power of today* does not pulsate is not worthy of Jesus and does not help people’s lives. That is why those who preach, please, are the first to experience the *today* of Jesus, so as to be able to communicate it in the today of others. And if they want to give lectures, conferences, let them do so, but elsewhere, not at the time of the homily, where they must give the Word in a way that rouses hearts.

Dear brothers and sisters, on this Sunday of the Word of God I would like to thank the preachers and proclaimers of the Gospel who remain faithful to the Word that rouses the heart, who remain faithful to “today”. Let us pray for them, that they may live the *today of Jesus*, the sweet power of his Spirit that makes the Scriptures come alive. The Word of God, is indeed alive and effective (cf. *Heb 4:12*); it changes us, it enters into our affairs, it illuminates our daily lives, it comforts and brings order. Remember: the Word of God transforms an ordinary day into *the today in which God speaks to us*. So, let us pick up the Gospel and choose each day a small passage to read and re-read. Keep the Gospel in your pocket or your bag, to read it on your travels, at any moment, and read it calmly. In time we will discover that these words are made especially for us, for our life. They will help us to welcome each day with a better, more serene outlook, because when the Gospel enters into today’s world, it fills it with God. I would like to make a suggestion. On the Sundays of this liturgical year the Gospel of Luke, the Gospel of mercy, is proclaimed. Why not also read it personally, all of it, one small passage each day? A short passage. Let us familiarize ourselves with the Gospel, it will bring us the newness and joy of God!

The Word of God is also the beacon that guides the synodal journey that has begun throughout the Church. As we strive to listen to each other, with attention and discernment – because it is not a question of opinion, no, but of discerning the Word, there – let us listen together to the Word of God and the Holy Spirit. And may Our Lady obtain for us the constancy to nourish ourselves with the Gospel every day.

After the Angelus

Dear brothers and sisters,

Yesterday, the Jesuit priest Rutilio Grande García and two lay companions, and the Franciscan priest Cosme Spessotto, martyrs to the faith, were beatified in San Salvador. They stood by the poor, bearing witness to the Gospel, truth and justice even to the point of shedding their blood. May their heroic example inspire in everyone the desire to be courageous workers of fraternity and peace. A round of applause to the new blessed!

I am following with concern the increase of tensions that threaten to inflict a new blow to the peace in Ukraine, and call into question the security of the European continent, with wider repercussions. I make a heartfelt appeal to all people of good will, that they may raise prayers to God Almighty, that every political action and initiative may serve human brotherhood, rather than partisan interests. Those who pursue their own interests, to the detriment of others, disregard their human vocation, as we were all created as brothers and sisters. For this reason, and with concern, given the current tensions, I propose that next Wednesday, 26 January be a day of prayer for peace.

In the context of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, I have accepted the proposal which has come from many quarters, and proclaimed Saint Irenaeus of Lyon a Doctor of the Universal Church. The teaching of this saintly pastor and teacher is like a bridge between East and West: this is why we call him a Doctor of Unity, *Doctor Unitatis*. May the Lord grant us, through his intercession, to work together for the full unity of Christians.

And now I address my greeting to all of you, dear faithful of Rome and pilgrims who have come from Italy and

other countries. I greet in particular the spiritual family of the Servants of Suffering and the *Agesci* Scouts of Lazio. And I also see that there is a group of compatriots: I greet the Argentines here present! And also the young people of the Immaculate Conception.

I wish you all a good Sunday. And please, do not forget to pray for me. Enjoy your lunch, and *arrivederci*.
