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# BOLLETTINO

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## The Pope's words at the Angelus prayer

At midday today, the Holy Father Francis prayed the Angelus in live link-up from the Chapel of the Casa Santa Marta.

The introductory reflection and the words following the Marian prayer were read by Msgr. Paolo Braida:

### Before the Angelus

Dear brothers and sisters, blessed Sunday!

Today I cannot appear at the window because I have this problem of inflammation of the lungs, and Monsignor Braida will read the reflection. He knows them well because it is he who writes them, and he always does it so well! Thank you very much for your presence.

Today, the last Sunday of the liturgical year and Solemnity of *Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe*, the Gospel speaks to us about the final judgement (*Mt 25: 31-46*) and tells us that it will be based on *charity*.

The scene that it presents to us is that of a regal hall, in which Jesus, "the Son of man" (v. 31) is seated on a throne. All the peoples are gathered at His feet and conspicuous among them are "the blessed" (v. 34), the friends of the King. But who are they? What is so special about these friends in the eyes of their Lord? According to the criteria of the world, the king's friends should be those who have given him wealth and power, who have helped him to conquer territories, to win battles, to make himself great among other rulers, perhaps to appear as a star on the front pages of newspapers or on social media, and to them he should say: "Thank you, because you have made me rich and famous, envied and feared". This is according to the criteria of the world.

However, according to the criteria of Jesus, friends are others: they are those who have served the weakest people. This is because the Son of man is a completely different King, who calls the poor "brethren", who

identifies with the hungry, the thirsty, the outsiders, the sick, the imprisoned, and says: “As you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me” (v. 40). He is a King sensitive to the problem of hunger, the need for a home, sickness and imprisonment (cf. vv. 35-36): all realities that are unfortunately all too current. The hungry, the homeless, often dressed as they can, crowd our streets: we meet them every day. And also with regard to infirmity and prison, we all know what it means to be sick, to make mistakes and to pay the consequences.

Well, the Gospel today tells us that the “blessed” are those who respond to these forms of poverty with *love*, with service: not by turning away, but by giving food and drink, clothing, sheltering, visiting; in a word, by *being close* to those in need. And this is because Jesus, our King who calls himself the *Son of man*, finds his favourite sisters and brothers in the most fragile women and men. His “royal court” is held where there are those who suffer and need help. This is the “court” of our King. And the style with which his friends, those who have Jesus for Lord, are called to distinguish themselves is his own style: compassion, mercy, tenderness. They ennoble the heart and descend like oil on the wounds of those wounded by life.

So, brothers and sisters, let us ask ourselves: do we believe that true kingship consists in mercy? Do we believe in the power of love? Do we believe that charity is the most kingly manifestation of man, and is an indispensable requirement for the Christian? And finally, a particular question: am I a friend of the King, that is, do I feel *personally* involved in the needs of the suffering people I find on my path?

May Mary, Queen of Heaven and Earth, help us to love Jesus our King in the least of his brethren.

### **After the Angelus.**

Dear brothers and sisters,

Today in the particular Churches we celebrate the 38th World Youth Day, on the theme *Rejoicing in hope*. I bless those who are taking part in the initiatives organized in the dioceses, in continuity with the World Youth Day in Lisbon. I embrace young people, the present and future of the world, and I encourage them to be joyful protagonists in the life of the Church.

Yesterday tormented Ukraine commemorated the *Holodomor*, the genocide perpetrated by the Soviet regime which, 90 years ago, caused millions of people to starve to death. That lacerating wound, instead of healing, is made even more painful by the atrocities of the war that continues to make that dear nation suffer. For all peoples torn apart by conflicts, let us continue to pray tirelessly, because prayer is the force of peace that stops the spiral of hatred, that breaks the cycle of revenge and opens up unexpected paths of reconciliation. Today let us thank God that there is finally a truce between Israel and Palestine, and some hostages have been freed. Let us pray that they will all be freed as soon as possible – think of their families! -, that more humanitarian aid will enter Gaza, and that dialogue is insisted upon: it is the only way, the only way to achieve peace. Those do not want dialogue do not want peace.

Besides war, our world is threatened by another great danger, that of the climate, which puts life on Earth, especially for the future generations, at risk. And this is contrary to the plan of God, who created everything for life. Therefore, next weekend, I will go to the United Arab Emirates to speak on Saturday at the COP 28 in Dubai. I thank everyone who will accompany this journey with prayer and with the commitment to take to heart the preservation of the common home.

I welcome you with affection, pilgrims from Italy and other parts of the world, in particular those from Pakistan, Poland and Portugal. I greet the faithful of Civitavecchia, Tarquinia and Piacenza, and the *Deputazione San Vito Martire* of Lequile, Lecce. I greet the candidates for confirmation from Viserba, Rimini; “*Assisi nel vento*” Group, and the “Don Giorgio Trotta” Choir from Vieste.

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

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