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The Pope's words at the Angelus prayer

Before the Angelus

After the Angelus

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 morning!

Today's liturgy presents to use the last parts of the missionary discourse of chapter 10 of the Gospel of Matthew (Cf. 10:37-42), in which Jesus instructs the twelve Apostles, at the moment in which He sends them for the first time on their mission to the villages of Galilee and Judea. In this final part Jesus emphasizes two essential aspects for the life of the missionary disciple: the first, that his *bond with Jesus is stronger* than any other bond; the second, that *the missionary brings not himself but Jesus*, and through Him the love of the celestial Father. These two aspects are connected, because the more Jesus is at the centre of the heart and life of the disciple, the more the disciple is "transparent" to His presence. The two go together.

"Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me" (v. 37), says Jesus. The affection of a father, the tenderness of a mother, the sweet friendship between brothers and sisters, all this, though very good and legitimate, cannot be put before Christ. Not because He wants us to be without heart and devoid of gratitude – rather, the contrary – but because the disciple's condition calls for a priority relationship with the master. Any disciple, a layman, a laywoman, a priest, a bishop: it is the priority relationship. Perhaps the first question we

should ask a Christian is: “But do you encounter Jesus? Do you pray to Jesus?”. The relationship. One might almost paraphrase the Book of Genesis: Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to Jesus Christ, and the two shall become one (Cf. Genesis 2:24).

He who lets himself be attracted by this bond of love and of life with the Lord Jesus, becomes one of His representatives, one of His “ambassadors”, especially by his way of being, of living, to the point that Jesus Himself, on sending the disciples on the mission, says to them: “Whoever receives you receives me, and whoever receives me receives Him Who sent me” (*Mt* 10:40). People need to be able to perceive that for that disciple Jesus is truly “the Lord”, He is truly the centre of his life, of all life. It does not matter if then, like every human person, he has his limitations and also his errors, provided he has the humility to acknowledge them. The important thing is that he does not have a dual heart – this is dangerous. I am a Christian, I am a disciple of Jesus, I am a priest, I am a bishop, but I have a dual heart – no, this is not right. He must not have a dual heart, but rather a simple heart, united; may he not put his foot in two shoes, but instead be honest with himself and with others. Double-dealing is not Christian. This is why Jesus prayed to the Father so that the disciples would not fall into the spirit of the world. Either you are with Jesus, or you are with the spirit of the world.

And here our experience as priests teaches us something very beautiful, something very important: it is precisely this reception of the holy faithful People of God, it is precisely this “cup of cold water” (v. 42), of which the Lord speaks today in the Gospel, given with affectionate faith, which helps one to be a good priest! There is reciprocity also in the mission: if you leave everything for Jesus, people recognize the Lord in you but, at the same time, it helps you to convert every day to Him, to renew and purify yourself of compromises and to overcome temptations. The closer a priest is to the People of God, the more he will feel close to Jesus, and the closer a priest is to Jesus, the closer he will feel to the People of God.

The Virgin Mary experienced personally what it means to love Jesus, detaching from herself, giving new meaning to family bonds, starting from faith in Him. By her maternal intercession, may she help us to be free and happy missionaries of the Gospel.

After the Angelus

Dear brothers and sisters,

On 5 July it will be Independence Day in Venezuela. I assure this dear nation of my prayer, and express my closeness to the families who have lost their sons in the protests. I appeal for an end to the violence and for a peaceful and democratic solution to the crisis. May Our Lady of Coromoto intercede for Venezuela! And let us all pray to Our Lady of Coromoto for Venezuela. “Hail Mary...”

I greet you all, Romans and pilgrims!

I greet in particular the Irish faithful from Belfast, and the young people from Schattdorf, Switzerland, who have recently received the Sacrament of Confirmation.

I greet the various parish groups and associations, as well as the participants in the motorcycle pilgrimage from Cardito, Naples.

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