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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!

This Sunday's liturgy presents to us a brief but very important Gospel passage (cf. *Mt 22:34-40*). The evangelist Matthew recounts that the Pharisees came together to put Jesus to the test. One of them, a Doctor of the Law, asked Him this question: "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" (v. 36). It is an insidious question, as the Law of Moses mentions more than six hundred precepts. How can one distinguish, among all these, the greatest commandment? However, Jesus does not hesitate, and answers: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind." And He adds: "You shall love your neighbour as yourself" (v. 37, 39).

Jesus' answer is not to be taken for granted because, among the many precepts of the Jewish Law, the most important were the Ten Commandments, communicated directly by God to Moses, as conditions of the pact of the Covenant with the people. However, Jesus wants it to be understood that without love for God and for one's neighbour, there is no true fidelity to this Covenant with the Lord. You can do many good things, fulfil many precepts, many good things, but if you don't have love, it is worthless.

This is confirmed by another text of the book of Exodus, the “code of the Covenant”, where it states that one cannot be in the Covenant with the Lord and mistreat those who enjoy His protection. And who are those who enjoy His protection? The Bible says they are the widow, the orphan, the stranger and the migrant; namely, those who are most alone and vulnerable (cf. *Ex* 22: 20-21). In responding to those Pharisees who had questioned Him, Jesus tries to help them put their religiosity in order, to re-establish what really counts and what is less important. Jesus says: “On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets” (*Mt* 22: 40). They are the most important and the others depend on these two. And Jesus in fact lived His life precisely in this way: preaching and doing what truly counts and is essential, namely, love. Love gives impetus and fruitfulness to life and to the journey of faith: without love, both life and faith remain sterile.

What Jesus proposes in this page of the Gospel is a marvellous ideal, which corresponds to the most authentic desire of our heart. In fact, we were created to love and to be loved. God, Who is Love, created us to make us participants in His life, to be loved by Him and to love Him and, with Him, to love other people. This is God’s “dream” for man. And, to realize it, we need His grace; we need to receive in ourselves the capacity to love, which comes from God Himself. Jesus offers us the Eucharist precisely for this reason. In it we receive Jesus in the greatest expression of His love, when He offered Himself to the Father for our salvation.

May the Holy Virgin help us to receive in our life the “great commandment” of love for God and for our neighbour. Indeed, even if we have known this since we were children, we will never cease to be converted to it and to put it into practice in the different situations in which we find ourselves.

After the Angelus

Dear brothers and sisters,

Giovanni Schiavo, priest of the Fathers of St. Joseph of Murialdo, was proclaimed Blessed yesterday in Caxias do Sul, Brazil. Born in the early 1900s in the hills of Vicenza, as a young priest he was sent to Brazil, where he worked zealously in the service of the people of God and in the formation of men and women religious. May his example help us to live fully our following of Christ and the Gospel.

I greet you all affectionately, Italian pilgrims and those from other countries, in particular, from Ballygawley, Ireland; Salzburg, Austria; and from the Traunstein and Berchtesgaden region, Germany. I greet the participants in the congress of the Italian Secular Institutes, whom I encourage in their witness of the Gospel in the world, and the FIDAS Blood Donors Association of Orta Nova, Foggia. I see there are Colombians there!

I greet the Togolese community in Italy, as well as that of Venezuela with the image of Our Lady of Chiquinquira, the “Chinita.” We entrust to the Virgin Mary the hopes and legitimate expectations of these two nations!

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