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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 Saint Peter's Square.

The following is the Pope's introduction to the Marian prayer:

Before the Angelus

Dear brothers and sisters, good morning!

Last Sunday we began Advent with the invitation to keep watch; today, the second Sunday of this time of preparation for Christmas, the liturgy shows us what it consists of: it is a time for recognizing the *voids to fill* in our life, to *smooth out the roughness* of pride and to make space for Jesus Who comes.

The prophet Isaiah addresses the people, announcing the end of exile in Babylon and the return to Jerusalem. He prophesies: "A voice cries: 'In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord; .. every valley shall be raised up'" (40: 3). The valleys to be raised up represent all the voids in our behaviour before God, all our sins of omission. A void in our life can be the fact that we do not pray, or we pray rarely. Advent, then, is a favourable moment to pray with more intensity, to reserve to the spiritual life the important place that it is due. Another void could be the lack of charity towards our neighbour, especially towards those most in need not only of material but also spiritual help. We are called to be more attentive to the needs of others, to be closer to them. Like John the Baptist, in this way we can open up highways of hope in the desert of the arid hearts of so many people.

"Every mountain and hill [shall be] made low", (40: 4), Isaiah exhorts again. The mountains and hills that must be lowered are pride, haughtiness, arrogance. Where there is pride, where there is arrogance, where there is

haughtiness, the Lord cannot enter because that heart is full of pride, arrogance and haughtiness. Therefore, we must bring down this pride. We must assume attitudes of meekness and humility, without shouting; listening and speaking meekly and thus preparing for the coming of our Saviour. He Who is meek and humble of heart (cf. *Mt* 11: 29), Then we are asked to eliminate all the obstacles we place in our union with the Lord. "The rough ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain. And the glory of the Lord will be revealed, and all people will see it together" (*Is* 40: 4-5). These actions must however be carried out with joy, because they are geared to the preparation for the arrival of Jesus. When we await at home the visit of a person dear to us, we prepare everything with care and good cheer. In the same way we wish to predispose ourselves for the coming of the Lord: awaiting Him every day with solicitude, so as to be filled with His grace when He arrives.

The Saviour Whom we await is capable of transforming our life with His grace, with the strength of the Holy Spirit, with the strength of love. Indeed the Holy Spirit effuses in our hearts God's love, inexhaustible source of purification, of new life and freedom. The Virgin Mary lived this reality in fullness, letting herself be "baptized" by the Holy Spirit Who inundated her with its power. May she, Who prepared for the coming of Christ with the fullness of her existence, help us to follow her example and guide our steps towards the Lord Who comes.

After the Angelus

Dear brothers and sisters,

Today the Nobel Peace Prize will be awarded to the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons. This recognition happens to coincide with the United Nations Day for Human Rights, and this emphasizes the strong link between human rights and nuclear disarmament. Indeed, to be committed to the protection of the dignity of all people, especially the weakest and most disadvantaged, also means working with determination to build a world without nuclear weapons. God gives us the ability to collaborate to build our common home: we have the freedom, the intelligence and the capacity to guide technology, to limit our power to the service of peace and true progress (cf. Encyclical Letter *Laudato si'*, 78, 112, 202).

The "*Our Planet Summit*" will be held in Paris the day after tomorrow. Two years after the adoption of the Paris Agreement on climate, its purpose is to renew the commitment to its implementation and to consolidate a shared strategy to counteract the worrying phenomenon of climate change. I earnestly hope that this Summit, as well as the other initiatives that are in this same direction, may foster a clear awareness of the need to adopt truly effective decisions to counteract climate change and, at the same time, to combat poverty and promote integral human development.

In this context, I would like to express my closeness to the Indian populations affected by cyclone Okhi, especially the families of the many missing fishermen, and also to the population of Albania, harshly afflicted by serious floods.

My greeting goes to all of you, Romans and pilgrims, in particular to the faithful from Valladolid and Huelva, in Spain. I greet the numerous groups of Italian young people from Florence, Carugate, Brembate, Alme, Petosino and Pian Camuno: I encourage you all to be joyful witnesses of the Gospel.

I wish you all a good Sunday and a good Advent journey, preparing the way for the Lord Who comes. Please, do not forget to pray for me. Have a good lunch, and goodbye.
