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The Pope's words at the Angelus prayer

Before the Angelus

After the Angelus

At midday today, Second Sunday of Lent, 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!

Today's Gospel, on the second Sunday of Lent, invites us to contemplate the transfiguration of Jesus (cf. *Mk* 9,2-10). This episode is related to what had occurred six days earlier, when Jesus revealed to His disciples that in Jerusalem He would have to "suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that He must be killed and after three days rise again" (*Mk* 8: 31). This announcement had challenged Peter and the whole group of disciples, who rejected the idea that Jesus would be refused by the leaders of the people and then killed. Indeed, they expected a powerful, strong, dominating Messiah, whereas Jesus appeared as a humble, meek, servant of God, servant of men, who must give His life in sacrifice, passing along the path of persecution, suffering and death. But how could one follow a Master and Messiah whose earthly life would end in that way? This is what they thought. And the answer comes precisely from the transfiguration. What is the transfiguration of Jesus? It is an early paschal apparition.

Jesus took with Him the three disciples Peter, James and John and "led them up a high mountain" (*Mk* 9: 2); and there, for a moment, shows them His glory, the glory of the Son of God. This event of the transfiguration thus

enables the disciples to face the passion of Jesus in a positive way, without being overwhelmed. They saw He as He would be after the passion, glorious. And so Jesus prepares them for their trial. The transfiguration helps the disciples, and us too, to understand that the passion of Christ is a mystery of suffering, but it is above all a gift of love, of infinite love on Jesus' part. The event of Jesus Who transfigures on the mountain also makes us understand better His resurrection. To understand the mystery of the cross it is necessary to know in advance that the one who suffers and who is glorified is not only a man, but the Son of God, Who saved us with His faithful love until death. Thus the Father renews His messianic declaration on the Son, already made on the banks of the Jordan after His baptism, and exhorts: "Listen to him!" (v. 7). The disciples are called to follow the Master with trust, with hope, despite his death; the divinity of Jesus must be manifested precisely on the cross, precisely in His dying "in that way", so here the evangelist Mark places in the mouth of the centurion the profession of faith: "Surely this man was the Son of God!" (15: 39).

Let us now turn in prayer to the Virgin Mary, the human creature transfigured inwardly by the grace of Christ. We trust in her motherly help to continue the journey of Lent with faith and generosity.

After the Angelus

Dear brothers and sisters,

In these days, my thoughts have turned often to the beloved and tormented Syria, where the war has intensified, especially in eastern Ghouta. This month of February has been one of the most violent in seven years of conflict: hundreds, thousands of civilian victims, children, women, the elderly: hospitals have been struck and people cannot obtain food... Brothers and sisters, all this is inhumane. One cannot defeat evil with more evil. And war is evil. Therefore, I address a heartfelt appeal that the violence may cease forthwith, that access be given for humanitarian aid – food and medicine – and that the wounded and sick be evacuated. Let us pray together to God that this may happen immediately.

[moment of silence]

Hail Mary...

I address a cordial greeting to all of you, pilgrims from Rome, Italy and other countries, in particular those from Spis in Slovakia.

I greet the representatives of the diocesan television station of Prato, with their bishop, the young people of the orchestra of Oppido Mamertina and scouts from Genoa. I greet the confirmands and young people of the profession of faith from Serravalle Scrivia, Verdellino, Zingonia, Lodi, Renate and Verduggio.

I greet the group that has come on the occasion of "Rare Disease Day", with encouragement to the associations that work in this field. Thank you. Thank you for what you do.

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