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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!

On this fourth Sunday of Lent, called "*Laetare*" Sunday, that is, "rejoice," because this is the Entrance Antiphon to the Eucharistic Liturgy, which invites us to joy: "Rejoice, Jerusalem [...] — so it's a call to joy — be glad and rejoice, you who mourned for her". The Mass begins thus. What is the reason for this joy? The reason is God's great love for humanity, as today's Gospel points out: "God, in fact, so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life" (*Jn* 3: 16). These words, pronounced by Jesus during the conversation with Nicodemus, summarize a theme that is at the centre of the Christian proclamation: even when a situation seems desperate, God intervenes, offering man salvation and joy. God, in fact, does not stand aside, but enters into the history of humanity, He gets involved in our life; He enters, to animate it with His grace and to save it.

We are called to listen to this proclamation, rejecting the temptation to consider ourselves secure in ourselves, to wish to do without God, claiming absolute freedom from Him and from His Word. When we rediscover the courage to recognize ourselves for what we are — it takes courage to do this! — we realize we are people called

to take account of our fragility and our limitations. Then it can happen that we are gripped by anguish, by anxiety for tomorrow, by fear of sickness and death. This explains why so many people, seeking a way out, sometimes take dangerous shortcuts as, for instance, the tunnel of drugs or that of superstitions and ruinous rituals of magic. It is good to be aware of our limitations, our fragilities: we must know them, not to despair, but to offer them to the Lord; and He helps us on the way to healing, He takes us by the hand, and never leaves us alone, never! God is with us; therefore I “rejoice,” we “rejoice” today: “Rejoice, Jerusalem”, [the antiphon] says, because God is with us.

And we have a true and great hope in God the Father, rich in mercy, who has given us His Son to save us, and this is our joy. We also have much sadness, but, when we are true Christians, there is that hope, which is a small joy that grows and gives security. We must not be discouraged when we see our limitations, our sins, our weaknesses: God is there, close by, Jesus is on the cross to heal us. This is God’s love. Look at Christ Crucified and say to yourself: “God loves me”. It is true, there are these limitations, these weaknesses, these sins, but He is greater than the limitations and the weaknesses and the sins. Don’t forget this”. God is greater than our weaknesses, than our infidelities, than our sins. And we take the Lord by the hand, we look at Christ Crucified, and we go on.

May Mary, Mother of Mercy, plant in our heart the certainty that God loves us; may she be close to us in moments when we feel alone, when we are tempted to surrender to life’s difficulties. May she communicate to us the sentiments of her Son Jesus so that our Lenten journey may become an experience of forgiveness, acceptance and charity.

After the Angelus

Dear brothers and sisters,

I greet you all, Romans and pilgrims from Italy and from various countries, in particular the faithful of Agropoli, Padua, Troina, Foggia and Caltanissetta, and the young people from the parish of Saint Anthony of Padua in Serra di Pepe.

I greet the Brazilian community of Rome, confirmands from Tivoli with their bishop, and young people from Avigliano and from Saronno.

I address a special greeting to the university students from various parts of the world and gathered in the first “*Vatican Hackathon*”, promoted by the Dicastery for Communication: dear young people, it is good to place the intelligence that God gives us in the service of the truth and of those who are most in need.

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