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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!

This Sunday's Gospel passage (cf. *Jn* 6: 51-58) introduces us to the second part of Jesus' address in the synagogue of Capernaum, after feeding a large crowd with five loaves and two fish — the multiplication of the loaves. He presents Himself as "the living bread come down from Heaven"; the bread that gives eternal life, and He adds, "The bread which I shall give for the life of the world *is my flesh*" (v. 51). This passage is decisive and indeed provokes a reaction among the listeners, who begin to argue among themselves: "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" (v. 52). When the sign of shared bread leads to its true meaning, namely, *the gift of Himself unto sacrifice*, incomprehension emerges, leading indeed to the rejection of He Who shortly before they wished to carry in triumph. Let us remember that Jesus had to hide because they wanted to make Him king.

Jesus continues: "Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink His blood, you have no life in you" (v. 53). Here together with the flesh, the blood also appears. Flesh and blood in biblical language express concrete humanity. The people and the disciples themselves intuit that Jesus is inviting them to enter into communion with Him, to "eat" Him, His humanity, to share with Him the gift of life for the world – quite different to the

triumphs and mirages of success! It is, in fact the sacrifice of Jesus Who gives Himself for us.

This bread of life, Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ, is given to us freely at the table of the Eucharist. Around the altar, we find that which feeds us and quenches us spiritually today and for eternity. Every time we take part in Holy Mass, we anticipate, in a certain sense, Heaven on earth, because from the Eucharistic food, the Body and Blood of Jesus, we learn what eternal life is. It is to live for the Lord: "He who eats Me will live because of Me" (v. 57), says the Lord. The Eucharist forms us so that we live not merely for ourselves but for the Lord and for our brothers. Happiness and eternal life depend on our capacity to make fruitful the evangelical love we receive in the Eucharist.

As He did at that time, Jesus repeats to each one of us today too: "Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink His blood, you have no life in you" (v. 53). Brothers and sisters, it is not a question of material food, but about a living and vivifying bread, which communicates the very life of God. When we go to Communion we receive the very life of God. To have this life it is necessary to be nourished by the Gospel and by the love of brothers. In face of Jesus' invitation to nourish ourselves by means of His Body and His Blood, we can perceive the need to dispute and resist, as the listeners did in today's Gospel passage. This happens when it is an effort for us to model our existence on that of Jesus, to act according to His criteria and not according to the criteria of the world. By nourishing ourselves with this food, we can enter into full harmony with Christ, with His sentiments and His deeds. It is so important to go to Mass and to Communion because to receive Communion is to receive the living Christ, Who transforms us within and prepares us for Heaven.

May the Virgin Mary support us in our resolution to commune with Jesus Christ, nourishing ourselves of His Eucharist, to become in turn broken bread for our brothers.

After the Angelus

Dear brothers and sisters,

Over the last days, intense rains –causing flooding and landslides, heavy loss of human life, many missing and displaced persons, and great damage to crops and homes – have harshly tried the inhabitants of Kerala, India. May there be no lack of our solidarity and the concrete support of the International Community for these brothers and sisters of ours. I am close to the Church in Kerala, which is on the front line in bringing aid to the population. Let us all be close to the Church in Kerala and let us pray together for all those who have lost their lives, and for those afflicted by this great calamity.

Let us pray in silence. *Hail Mary...*

I address a warm greeting to you all, Italian pilgrims and those from various countries. In particular I greet young people from Ukraine and encourage them to be agents of peace and reconciliation. I greet the new seminarians with the Superiors of the North American College of Rome, as well as the adolescents and young people of the diocese of Verona.

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