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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.

In this third Sunday of Advent (Gaudete Sunday), children from the *Centro Oratori Romani* (COR), the parishes and the families of Rome were present for the blessing of their images of the baby Jesus.

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

Before the Angelus

Dear brothers and sisters, good morning!

On this third Sunday of Advent the liturgy invites us to joy. Listen carefully: to joy. With these words the Prophet Zephaniah addresses a small portion of the people of Israel: "Sing, daughter Zion, shout aloud, Israel! Be glad and rejoice with all your heart, daughter Jerusalem!" (3: 14). Shout with joy, rejoice, rejoice: this is the invitation of this Sunday. The inhabitants of the holy city are called to rejoice because the Lord has revoked His condemnation (see verse 15). God has forgiven, He did not want to punish! As a consequence there is no longer any reason for sadness for the people, there is no longer any reason for discouragement, but everything leads to a joyful gratitude to God, Who always wants to redeem and save those He loves. And the love of the Lord for His people is incessant, comparable to the tenderness of the father for the children, of the bridegroom for the bride, as Zephaniah says: "He will take great delight in you; in His love He will no longer rebuke you, but will rejoice over you with singing" (v. 17). This is – as it is called – the Sunday of joy: the third Sunday of Advent, before

Christmas.

This appeal of the prophet is especially appropriate in the time we prepare for Christmas, because it applies to Jesus, Emmanuel, God-with-us: His presence is the source of joy. In fact, Zephaniah proclaims: "The Lord, the King of Israel, is with you"; and a little later he repeats: "The Lord your God is with you, the Mighty Warrior who saves" (verses 15, 17). This message finds its full meaning in the moment of the Annunciation to Mary, narrated by the evangelist Luke. The words addressed by the angel Gabriel to the Virgin are like an echo of those of the prophet. What does the archangel Gabriel say? "Greetings, you who are highly favoured! The Lord is with you" (Lk 1: 28). "Rejoice", he tells the Madonna. In a remote village in Galilee, in the heart of a young woman unknown to the world, God ignites the spark of happiness for the whole world. And today the same proclamation is addressed to the Church, called to welcome the Gospel so that it may become flesh, concrete life. He says to the Church, to all of us: "Rejoice, small Christian community, poor and humble but beautiful in my eyes because you ardently desire my Kingdom, you are hungry and thirsty for justice; patiently weave the fabric of peace, do not pursue those who may be powerful now, but stay faithfully beside the poor. And in this way you will not be afraid of anything, but your heart will be in joy". If we live like this, in the presence of the Lord, our heart will always be in joy. The "high level" joy, when it is there, full, and the humble joy of every day, that is peace. Peace is the smallest joy, but it is joy.

Today, too, St. Paul urges us not to worry, not to despair at all, but in all circumstances to present to God our requests, our needs, our concerns "with prayers and petitions" (Phil 4: 6). The awareness -that in difficulties we can always turn to the Lord, and that He never rejects our invocations, is a great reason for joy. No worry, no fear will ever take away the serenity that comes not from human things, from human consolations, no, the serenity that comes from God, from knowing that God lovingly guides our lives, and always does. Even in the midst of problems and sufferings, this certainty nourishes hope and courage.

But to accept the Lord's invitation to joy, we need to be people willing to question themselves. What does this mean? Just like those who, after listening to John the Baptist's sermon, asked him: you preach in this way, and we, "What should we do then?" (Lk 3: 10). What should I do? This question is the first step for the conversion that we are invited to perform in this time of Advent. Each one of us should ask himself: what must I do? A very small thing, but "what must I do?" And may the Virgin Mary, who is our mother, help us to open our heart to God-Who-comes, so that He might inundate all our life with joy.

After the Angelus

Dear brothers and sisters,

Last week the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, intended to be a framework of reference for all the international community, was approved in Marrakech, Morocco. I therefore hope that, thanks to this instrument, the international community may work with responsibility, solidarity and compassion towards those who, for various reasons, have left their own country, and entrust this intention to your prayers.

I greet all of you, families, parish groups and associations, who have come to Rome from Italy and from many parts of the world. In particular I greet the pilgrims from Seville, Hamburg, Munich and Chapelle, Belgium. I greet the faithful of Pescara, Potenza, Bucchianico, Fabriano and Blera; the Combonian lay missionaries, and scouts from Jesolo and Ca' Savio.

And now I address in a special way you, dear children of Rome, who have come for the blessing of the "Bambinelli", the little figures of Jesus, accompanied by the auxiliary bishop Msgr. Ruzza. I thank the *Centro Oratori Romani* and volunteers. Dear children, in your houses, you will collect yourselves in prayer before the nativity display, and gazing at the baby Jesus you will feel wonder... You ask me, what does "wonder" mean? It is a stronger sentiment and more than a common emotion. It is seeing God: wonder at the great mystery of God made man; and the Holy Spirit will place humility, tenderness and the goodness of Jesus in your heart. Jesus is

good, Jesus is tender, Jesus is humble. This is the true Christmas! Do not forget this. May it be thus for you and for your families. I bless all your "Bambinelli".

I wish you all a good Sunday and a good third week of Advent. With joy, great joy, and great peace when joy is not possible. And please, do not forget to pray for me. Have a good lunch, and goodbye.
