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The Pope's words at the Angelus prayer

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 are the Pope's words of introduction to the Marian prayer:

Before the Angelus

Dear brothers and sisters, buongiorno!

The Gospel of this Sunday's liturgy recounts the famous episode of the multiplication of the loaves and fishes, with which Jesus feeds about five thousand people who came to hear him (cf. *Jn* 6:1-15). It is interesting to see how this miracle takes place: Jesus does not create the loaves and fishes from nothing, no, but rather He works with what the disciples bring him. One of them says: "There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish. But what are they among so many people?" (v. 9). It is little, it is nothing, but it is enough for Jesus.

Let us now try to put ourselves in the place of that boy. The disciples ask him to share everything he has to eat. It seems to be an unreasonable proposal, or rather, unjust. Why deprive a person, indeed a child, of what he has brought from home and has the right to keep for himself? Why take away from one person what is not enough to feed everyone anyway? In human terms, it is illogical. But not for God. On the contrary, thanks to that small freely-given and therefore heroic gift, Jesus is able to feed everyone. This is a great lesson for us. It tells us that the Lord can do a lot with the little that we put at His disposal. It would be good to ask ourselves every day: "What do I bring to Jesus today?". He can do a lot with one of our prayers, with a gesture of charity for others, even with one of our sufferings handed over to His mercy. Our small things to Jesus, and He works miracles. This is how God loves to act: He does great things, starting from those small things, those freely-given ones.

All the great protagonists of the Bible - from Abraham, to Mary, to the boy today - show this logic of smallness and giving. The logic of smallness and giving. The logic of giving is so different from ours. We try to accumulate

and increase what we have, but Jesus asks us to give, to diminish. We like to add, we like addition; Jesus likes subtraction, taking something away to give it to others. We want to multiply for ourselves; Jesus appreciates it when we share with others, when we share. It is interesting that in the accounts of the multiplication of the loaves in the Gospels, the verb “multiply” never appears: no. On the contrary, the verbs used have the opposite meaning: “to break”, “to give”, “to distribute” (cf. v. 11; *Mt* 14:19; *Mk* 6:41; *Lk* 9:16). But the verb “to multiply” is not used. The true miracle, says Jesus, is not the multiplication that produces vanity and power, but the sharing that increases love and allows God to perform wonders. Let us try to share more: let us try the way Jesus teaches us.

Even today, the multiplication of goods cannot solve problems without fair sharing. The tragedy of hunger comes to mind, which affects the little ones in particular. It has been calculated officially that every day in the world around seven thousand children under the age of five die due to malnutrition, because they do not have what they need to live. Faced with scandals such as these, Jesus also addresses an invitation to us, an invitation similar to the one probably received by the boy in the Gospel, who has no name and in whom we can all see ourselves: “Be brave, give what little you have, your talents, your possessions, make them available to Jesus and to your brothers and sisters. Do not be afraid, nothing will be lost, because if you share, God will multiply. Banish the false modesty of feeling inadequate, trust yourself. Believe in love, believe in the power of service, believe in the strength of gratuitousness”.

May the Virgin Mary, who answered “yes” to God’s unprecedented proposal, help us to open our hearts to the Lord’s invitations and to the needs of others.

After the Angelus

Dear brothers and sisters,

We have just celebrated the Liturgy on the occasion of the First World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly. A round of applause to all the grandparents! Grandparents and grandchildren, young and old together, have showed one of the beautiful faces of the Church and demonstrated the covenant between the generations. I invite you to celebrate this Day in every community and to visit grandparents and the elderly, those who are most alone, to take to them my message, inspired by Jesus’ promise: “I am with you every day”. I ask the Lord that this feast may help those of us who are older to respond to His call in this season of life, and show society the value of the presence of grandparents and the elderly, especially in this throwaway culture. Grandparents need young people and young people need grandparents: they must talk to each other, they must encounter one another! Grandparents have the sap of history that rises up and gives strength to the growing tree. I am reminded - I think I quoted it once - of that passage by a poet: “All that blossoms on the tree comes from that which is under the ground”. Without dialogue between young people and their grandparents, history does not move forward, life does not move forward: we need to take this up again, it is a challenge for our culture. Grandparents have the right to dream by looking at young people, and young people have the right to the courage of prophecy, drawing on their lifeblood from their grandparents. Please, do this: meet grandparents and young people and talk, converse. It will bring happiness to everyone.

In recent days, torrential rains have hit the city of Zhengzhou and Henan Province in China, causing devastating floods. I pray for the victims and their families, and express my sympathy and solidarity with all those who are suffering as a result of this calamity.

Last Friday, the 32nd Olympic Games opened in Tokyo. In this time of pandemic, may these Games be a sign of hope, a sign of universal brotherhood under the banner of healthy competition. God bless the organisers, the athletes and all those who collaborate in this great festival of sport!

I warmly greet you all, Romans and pilgrims. In particular, I greet the group of grandparents from Rovigo - thank you for coming! - the young people of Albinea who have walked the Via Francigena from Emilia to Rome; and

the participants in the “Roma Capitale Rally”. I also greet the community of the Cenacolo. I wish everyone a good Sunday. Please do not forget to pray for me. Have a nice lunch and goodbye! Congratulations to you, children of the Immaculate, for the final approval!
