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The Pope's words at the Angelus prayer

At midday today, Solemnity of All Saints, 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!*

Today we celebrate All Saints, and in the Liturgy the "programmatic" message of Jesus resounds: namely, the Beatitudes (cf. *Mt 5:1-12a*). They show us the path that leads to the Kingdom of God and to happiness: the path of humility, compassion, meekness, justice and peace. To be a saint is to walk on this road. Let us now focus on two aspects of this way of life. Two aspects that are proper to this saintly way of life: *joy* and *prophecy*.

Joy. Jesus begins with the word "Blessed" (*Mt 5:3*). It is the principal proclamation, that of an unprecedented happiness. Beatitude, holiness, is not a life plan made up only of effort and renunciation, but is above all the joyful discovery of being God's beloved sons and daughters. And this fills you with joy. It is not a human achievement, it is a gift we receive: we are holy because God, who is the Holy One, comes to dwell in our lives. It is He who gives holiness to us. For this we are blessed! The joy of the Christian, then, is not a fleeting emotion or a simple human optimism, but the certainty of being able to face every situation under God's loving gaze, with the courage and strength that come from Him. The saints, even in the midst of many tribulations, have experienced this joy and have borne witness to it. Without joy, faith becomes a rigorous and oppressive exercise, and risks ailing with sadness. Let us consider this word: ailing with sadness. A desert Father said that sadness is "a worm that burrows into the heart", which corrodes life (cf. EVAGRIUS PONTICUS, *The Eight Spirits of Evil*, XI). Let us ask ourselves this: are we joyful Christians? Am I a joyful Christian or not? Do we spread joy or are we dull, sad people, with a funeral face? Remember that there is no holiness without joy!

The second aspect: *prophecy*. The Beatitudes are addressed to the poor, the afflicted, those who hunger for justice. It is a message that goes against the grain. Indeed, the world says that in order to have happiness you must be rich, powerful, always young and strong, and enjoy fame and success. Jesus overturns these criteria and makes a prophetic proclamation – and this is the prophetic dimension of holiness – the true fullness of life is achieved by following Jesus, by putting His Word into practice. And this means another poverty, that is, being poor inside, hollowing oneself to make room for God. Those who believe themselves to be rich, successful and secure base everything on themselves and close themselves off from God and their brothers and sisters, while those who know that they are poor and not self-sufficient remain open to God and to their neighbour. And they find joy. The Beatitudes, then, are *the prophecy of a new humanity*, of a new way of living: making oneself small and entrusting oneself to God, instead of prevailing over others; being meek, instead of seeking to impose oneself; practising mercy, instead of thinking only of oneself; committing oneself to justice and peace, instead of promoting injustice and inequality, even by connivance. Holiness is accepting and putting into practice, with God's help, this prophecy that revolutionises the world. So, we can ask ourselves: do I bear witness to the prophecy of Jesus? Do I express the prophetic spirit I received in Baptism? Or do I conform to the comforts of life and to my own laziness, assuming that everything is fine if it is fine with me? Do I bring to the world the joyful newness of Jesus' prophecy or the usual complaints about what is wrong? Questions that are good for us to ask ourselves.

May the Holy Virgin give us something of her soul, that blessed soul that joyfully magnified the Lord, who "has put down the mighty from their thrones, and exalted those of low degree" (cf. *Lk* 1:52).

After the Angelus

Dear brothers and sisters,

I warmly greet all of you, Romans and pilgrims. I extend a special greeting to the participants in the *Corsa dei Santi*, the *Saints' Run* organised by the Foundation "Don Bosco in the World". It is important to promote the educational value of sport. Thank you also for your initiative in favour of the children of Colombia.

Tomorrow morning, I will go to the French Military Cemetery in Rome: it will be an opportunity to pray for the eternal repose of all the deceased, especially for the victims of war and violence. In visiting this cemetery, I join spiritually with all those who during these days go to pray at the tombs of their loved ones, in every part of the world.

I wish everyone a happy feast of the Saints, in the spiritual company of all the Saints. Please do not forget to pray for me. Enjoy your meal and *arrivederci!*
