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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!*

At the centre of the Gospel of today's Liturgy are the Beatitudes (cf. *Lk* 6:20-23). It is interesting to note that Jesus, despite being surrounded by a great crowd, proclaims them by addressing them to "his disciples" (v. 20). He speaks to the disciples. Indeed, the Beatitudes define the identity of the disciple of Jesus. They may sound strange, almost incomprehensible to those who are not disciples; whereas, if we ask ourselves what a disciple of Jesus is like, the answer is precisely the Beatitudes. "Blessed are you poor, for yours is the Kingdom of God" (v. 20). *Blessed are you poor*. Jesus says two things to his people: that they are blessed and they are poor; indeed, that they are blessed because they are poor.

In what sense? In the sense that disciples Jesus do not find their joy in money, power, or other material goods; but in the gifts they receive every day from God: life, creation, brothers and sisters, and so on. These are gifts of life. They are content to share even the goods they possess, because they live according to the logic of God. And what is the logic of God? Gratuitousness. The disciple has learned to live in gratuitousness. This poverty is also an attitude towards the meaning of life, because Jesus' disciples do not think about possessing it, about already knowing everything, but rather they know they must learn every day. And this is poverty: the awareness of having to learn every day. The disciple of Jesus, since he or she has this attitude, is a humble, open person, far from prejudice and inflexibility.

There was a good example in last Sunday's Gospel reading: Simon Peter, an expert fisherman, accepts Jesus'

invitation to cast his nets at an unusual hour, and then, full of wonder at the miraculous catch, leaves the boat and all his goods to follow the Lord. Peter shows himself to be docile by leaving everything, and in this way, he becomes a disciple. Instead, those who are too attached to their own ideas and their own securities, find it difficult to truly follow Jesus. They follow him a little, only in those things in which “I agree with him and he agrees with me”, but then, as far as the rest is concerned, it goes no further. And this is not a disciple. Perhaps they listen to him, but they do not follow him. And so, they fall into sadness. They become sad because the accounts do not add up, because reality escapes their mentality and they find they are dissatisfied. Disciples, on the other hand, know how to question themselves, how to humbly seek God every day, and this allows them to delve into reality, grasping its richness and complexity.

In other words, the disciple accepts *the paradox of the Beatitudes*: they declare that those who are poor, who lack many goods and recognize this, are blessed, that is, happy. Humanly speaking, we are inclined to think in another way: happy are those who are rich, with many goods, who receive plaudits and are the envy of many, who have all the certainties. But this is a worldly mindset, it is not the way of thinking of the Beatitudes! Jesus, on the contrary, declares worldly success to be a failure, since it is based on a selfishness that inflates and then leaves the heart empty. Faced with *the paradox of the Beatitudes*, disciples allow themselves to be challenged, aware that it is not God who must enter into our logic, but we into his. This requires a journey, sometimes wearisome, but always accompanied by joy. Because the disciple of Jesus is joyful, with the joy that comes from Jesus. Because, let us remember, the first word Jesus says is: *blessed, beati*, which gives us the name of the *Beatitudes*. This is the synonym of being disciples of Jesus. The Lord, by freeing us from the slavery of self-centredness, breaks our locks, dissolves our hardness, and opens up to us true happiness, which is often found where we do not expect it to be. It is he who guides our life, not us, with our preconceptions and our demands. Disciples, in the end, are those who let themselves be led by Jesus, who open their heart to Jesus, who listen to him and follow his path.

We might then ask ourselves: do I – each one of us – have the disciple’s readiness? Or do I behave with the rigidity of one who believes him- or herself to be right, who feels decent, who feels they have already arrived? Do I allow myself to be “inwardly unhinged” by the paradox of the Beatitudes, or do I stay within the confines of my own ideas? And then, with the logic of the Beatitudes, setting aside the hardships and difficulties, do I feel the joy of following Jesus? This is the decisive trait of the disciple: the joy of the heart. Let’s not forget – the joy of the heart. This is the touchstone for knowing if a person is a disciple: does he or she have joy in the heart? Do I have joy in my heart? This is the point.

May Our Lady, first disciple of the Lord, help us live as open and joyful disciples.

After the Angelus

Dear brothers and sisters,

The news from Ukraine is very worrying. I entrust every effort for peace to the intercession of the Virgin Mary and to the conscience of the political leaders. Let us pray in silence.

I heartily greet you all: Romans and pilgrims from Italy and from various countries.

In particular, I greet the faithful of Funchal and Estreito de Câmara de Lobos, on the Island of Madeira, Portugal, as well as those from Perugia and Catanzaro.

I wish you all a blessed Sunday. Please, do not forget to pray for me. Enjoy your lunch, and *arrivederci*.
