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BIURO PRASOWE STOLICY APOSTOLSKIEJ دار الصحافة التابعة للكرسي الرسولي

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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, happy Sunday!

In the passage from the Gospel of Luke for this Sunday's liturgy, someone asks Jesus, "will those who are saved be few?" And the Lord responds: "Strive to enter through the narrow door" (*Lk 13:24*). The *narrow door*...this is an image that could scare us, as if salvation is destined for only a few elect, or perfect people. But this contradicts what Jesus taught us on many other occasions. And, as a matter of fact, a little further ahead, he confirms, "People will come from east and west, and from north and south, and recline at table in the kingdom of God" (v. 29). Therefore, this door is *narrow*, but is *open to everyone!* Do not forget this. The door is open to everyone!

But to better understand, what this *narrow door* is, we need to ask what it is. Jesus was using an image from contemporary life, most likely referring to the fact that, when evening would fall, the doors of the city would be closed and only one, the smallest and the narrowest, would remain open. To return home, someone could get through only there.

Now let's think about when Jesus says, "I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved" (*Jn 10:9*). He wants to tell us that to enter into God's life, into salvation, we need to pass through him, not through another one, through him; to welcome him and his Word. Just as to enter into the city, someone had to "measure" the same as the only remaining open narrow door, so too the Christian door is a life whose "measure is Christ", founded and modeled on him. This means that the rule of measure is Jesus and his Gospel – not what we think,

but what he says to us. So, we are talking about a narrow door not because only a few are destined to go through it, no, but because to belong to Christ means to follow him, to live one's life in love, in service, and in giving oneself as he did, who passed through the narrow door of the cross. Entering into the project God proposes for our life requires that we restrict the space of egoism, reduce the presumption of self-sufficiency, lower the heights of pride and arrogance, and that we overcome laziness, in order to traverse the risk of love, even when it involves the cross.

Let's think, in concrete terms, about those daily acts of love that we struggle to carry on with: let's think of the parents who dedicate themselves to their children, making sacrifices and renouncing time for themselves; of those who concern themselves about others and not only about their own interests (how many people are good like this); let's think of those who spend themselves in service to the elderly, to the poorest and most vulnerable; let's think of those who keep on working committedly, putting up with discomfort and, perhaps, with misunderstanding; let's think of those who suffer because of their faith, but who continue to pray and love; let's think of those who, rather than following their own instincts, respond to evil with good, finding the strength to forgive and the courage to begin again. These are just a few examples of people who do not choose the wide door of their own convenience, but the narrow door of Jesus, of a life spent in loving. The Lord says today that the Father will recognize them much more than those who believe they are already saved but who are actually "workers of evil" (Lk 13:27) in life.

Brothers and sisters, which side do we want to be on? Do we prefer the easy way of thinking only about ourselves, or do we choose the narrow door of the Gospel that puts our selfishness into crisis, but which makes us able to welcome the true life that comes from God and makes us happy? Which side are we on? May Our Lady, who followed Jesus all the way to the cross, help us to measure our life with him so as to enter into the fullness of eternal life.

After the Angelus

Brothers and sisters,

I am following closely, with concern and sorrow, the situation created in Nicaragua that involves persons and institutions. I would like to express my conviction and my hope that, through an open and sincere dialogue, the basis for a respectful and peaceful co-existence might still be found. Let us ask the Lord, through the intercession of the *Purísima*, to inspire everyone's heart with this concrete will.

Brothers and sisters, I greet all of you, people from Rome and pilgrims from various countries – families, parish groups, associations. In particular, I greet the community from the Pontifical North American College, especially the new seminaries who have just arrived, and I encourage them in their spiritual commitment, and urge them be faithful to the Gospel and to the Church. I greet those consecrated women in the *Ordo virginum*, and I encourage them to witness to the joy of the love of Christ.

I greet the faithful from Verona, Trevignano, Pratissolo, the young people from Paternò, Lequile and those participating in the *Via Lucis* who, inspired by the example of the Saints "next door", will be meeting with the poor who live near railway stations. And a greeting to the young people of the *Immacolata*.

Let us persevere in our closeness and in prayer for the dear Ukrainian people who are experiencing inhuman cruelty.

I wish all of you a happy Sunday. And, please do not forget to pray for me. Enjoy your lunch and *arrivederci!*
