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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 course of the war in Ukraine has become so serious, devastating and threatening, as to cause great concern. Therefore, today I would like to devote the entire reflection before the Angelus to this. Indeed, instead of healing, this terrible and inconceivable wound of humanity continues to shed ever more blood, risking to widen further.

I am saddened by the rivers of blood and tears spilled in these months. I am saddened by the thousands of victims, especially children, and the destruction which has left many people and families homeless and threatens vast territories with cold and hunger. Certain actions can never be justified, never! It is disturbing that the world is learning the geography of Ukraine through names such as Bucha, Irpin, Mariupol, Izium, Zaporizhzhia and other areas, which have become places of indescribable suffering and fear. And what to say about the fact that humanity is once again faced with a nuclear threat? It is absurd.

What more has to happen? How much blood must continue to flow for us to realize that war is never a solution, only destruction? In the name of God and in the name of the sense of humanity that dwells in every heart, I renew my call for an immediate ceasefire. May weapons be silenced and may conditions be sought for the start of negotiations that will lead to solutions that are not imposed by force, but consensual, just and stable. And they will be so if they are based on respect for the sacrosanct value of human life, as well as on the sovereignty and territorial integrity of each country, and the rights of minorities and legitimate concerns.

I deeply deplore the grave situation that has arisen in recent days, with further actions contrary to the principles of international law. Indeed, it increases the risk of nuclear escalation, giving rise to fears of uncontrollable and catastrophic consequences worldwide.

My appeal is addressed first and foremost to the President of the Russian Federation, imploring him to stop this spiral of violence and death, also for the sake of his own people. On the other hand, saddened by the immense suffering of the Ukrainian people as a result of the aggression they have suffered, I address an equally confident appeal to the President of Ukraine to be open to serious proposals for peace. I urge all the protagonists of international life and the political leaders of nations to do everything possible to bring an end to the war, without allowing themselves to be drawn into dangerous escalations, and to promote and support initiatives for dialogue. Please let us allow the younger generations to breathe the healthy air of peace, not the polluted air of war, which is madness!

After seven months of hostilities, let us use all diplomatic means, even those that may not have been used so far, to bring an end to this terrible tragedy. War in itself is an error and a horror!

Let us trust in the mercy of God, who can change hearts, and in the maternal intercession of the Queen of Peace, as we raise our Supplication to Our Lady of the Rosary of Pompeii, spiritually united with the faithful gathered at her Shrine and in so many parts of the world.

After the Angelus

Dear brothers and sisters, I am close to the populations of Cuba and Florida, who were afflicted by a violent hurricane. May the Lord receive the victims, give consolation and hope to those who suffer, and sustain solidarity efforts.

And I also pray for those who lost their lives and those who were injured in the clashes that broke out after a football match in Malang in Indonesia.

This evening, an audiovisual work on the figure of the apostle Peter will be projected onto the façade of Saint Peter's Basilica. The projections will be repeated until 16 October, every evening from 9 pm to 11 pm. I thank those who have worked on this initiative, which will inaugurate a pastoral itinerary dedicated to Saint Peter and his mission.

I greet you all, people of Rome and pilgrims from various countries: families, parish groups, and associations. In particular, I greet the group from the Diocese of Nanterre, France, and that of the Italian Catholic Mission of Karlsruhe, Germany. I greet the faithful of Cordenons, Corbetta, Arcade-Povegliano, Formia, Grumo Appula and Cagliari.

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