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## The Pope's words at the Angelus prayer

At midday today, second Sunday of Lent, 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 second Sunday of Lent presents us with the episode of the Transfiguration of Jesus (cf. Mk 9:2-10).

After having announced his Passion to the disciples, Jesus takes Peter, James, and John with him and goes up a high mountain, and physically manifests himself there in all his light. In this way, he reveals to them the meaning of what they had experienced together up to that moment. The preaching of the Kingdom, the forgiveness of sins, the healings, and the performed signs were, indeed, sparks of a greater light, namely, of the light of Jesus, of the light that Jesus *is*. And from this light, the disciples are never to direct their eyes away, especially in moments of trial, like those of the Passion which was near at this point.

This is today's message: *never direct your eyes away from the light of Jesus*. It is a little like what farmers used to do in the past while plowing their fields: they focused their gaze on a specific point ahead of them and, while keeping their eyes fixed on that point, they traced straight furrows.

This is what we are called to do as Christians while we journey through life: to always keep the luminous face of Jesus before our eyes.

Brothers and sisters, let us be open to welcome the light of Jesus! He is love, He is life without end. Along the roads of existence, which can be tortuous from time to time, let us seek His face, that is full of mercy, fidelity, and hope. It is Prayer, listening to the Word and the Sacraments, especially Confession and the Eucharist, that help us to do this: Prayer, listening to the Word and the Sacraments help us to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus. And this is a good Lenten resolution: cultivating a welcoming outlook, becoming "seekers of light," seekers of the light of Jesus, both in prayer and in people.

So let us ask ourselves: do I keep my eyes fixed on Christ who accompanies me? And in order to do so, do I make space for silence, prayer, adoration? Finally, do I seek out every little ray of Jesus' light, which is reflected in me and in every brother and sister I encounter? And do I remember to thank him for this?

May Mary, who shines with the light of God, help us to keep our gaze fixed on Jesus and to look at each other with trust and love.

### After the Angelus

Dear brothers and sisters,

It is with sorrow that we remembered the second anniversary of the beginning of the large-scale war in Ukraine yesterday, February the 24th. How many victims and injured people, how much destruction, anguish and tears in a period that is becoming terribly long and the end of which cannot be seen yet! It is a war that is not only devastating that region of Europe but which is unleashing a global wave of fear and hatred. While renewing my heartfelt affection for the tormented Ukrainian people, I keep praying for everyone, especially for the countless innocent victims. I earnestly plead that the little humanity needed to create the conditions for a diplomatic solution in seeking for a just and lasting peace be sought. And, brothers and sisters, let us not forget to pray for Palestine, for Israel, and for the many peoples torn apart by war, and to concretely help those who suffer! Let us think of the huge amount of suffering, let us think of the wounded, innocent children.

It is with concern that I am following the increase in violence in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. I join the bishops' call to pray for peace, hoping that the clashes may cease and that a sincere and constructive dialogue may be sought.

The increasingly frequent kidnappings in Nigeria are extremely concerning. I express my closeness in prayer to the Nigerian people, hoping that efforts will be made to contain the spread of these incidents as much as possible.

I am also close to the population of Mongolia, affected by a wave of intense cold, which is causing serious humanitarian consequences. This extreme phenomenon is also a sign of climate change and its effects. The climate crisis is a global social problem that deeply affects the lives of many brothers and sisters, especially the life of the most vulnerable: let us pray to be able to make wise and courageous choices to contribute to the care of creation.

I greet you, faithful of Rome and from various parts of the world, especially the pilgrims from Jaén (Spain), the young Greek-Catholic Romanians from Paris, the Neocatechumenal Communities from Poland, Romania, and Italy.

I also greet the Interregional Pontifical Seminary of Posillipo, the Secretariat of the International Forum of Catholic Action, the Scouts of Paliano, and the confirmands of Lastra Signa, Torre Maina, and Gorzano.

I also greet the Italian Federation of Rare Diseases, the Cultural Circle "Reggio Ricama," the members of the Nonviolent Movement, and the volunteers of the N.O.E.T.A.A. Association. And I greet the young people of

the *Immacolata*.

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

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