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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 approximately twelve thousand faithful 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!

Today the Gospel tells us about Jesus who, after the miracle of the loaves and fishes, invites the crowds who are looking for him to reflect on what took place to understand the meaning of it (cf. *Jn* 6:24-35).

They had eaten the food that was shared and seen how even with few resources all had been fed and had their fill through the generosity and courage of a young man who made available what he had with others. (cf. *Jn* 6:1-13). The sign was clear: if everyone gives to others what they have, with God's help, even with little everyone can have something. Let us not forget this: if one gives to others what one has, with God's help, even with little everyone can have something.

The crowds did not understand: they mistook Jesus for some kind of magician and went back to look for him, hoping he would repeat the miracle as if it were magic (cf. v. 26).

They were the protagonists of an experience in their journey, but they did not grasp its significance: their attention focused only on the loaves and fishes, the actual food that finished immediately. They did not realise that this was only an instrument through which the Father, while satisfying their hunger, revealed something far more important to them. And what did the Father reveal to them? The path of life that lasts forever and the taste of bread that satisfies beyond any measure. The true bread, in short, was and is Jesus, his beloved Son made man (cf. v. 35), who came to share our poverty in order to lead us through it to the joy of full communion with God and with our brothers and sisters (cf. *Jn* 3:16).

Material things do not give fullness to life. They help us go forward and are important, but they do not fulfill our lives. Only love can do that (cf. *Jn* 6:35). And for this to happen, the path to take is that of charity which keeps nothing for itself, but shares everything. Love shares everything.

And does this not happen also in our own families? We can see it. Let us think of parents who struggle all their lives to raise their children well and leave them something for the future. How beautiful when this message is understood, and the children are grateful and in turn become supportive of each other like brothers and sisters! How sad, on the other hand, when they fight over inheritance – I have seen so many cases and it is sad - and they are fighting each other and perhaps they do not speak to each other again for years! The message of a father and a mother, their most precious legacy, is not money. It is the love with which they give their children everything they have, just as God does with us, and in this way, they teach us to love.

Let us ask ourselves, then: what kind of relationship do I have with material things? Am I a slave to them, or do I use them freely as instruments to give and receive love? Am I able to say "thank you" to God and my brothers and sisters for the gifts I have received. And do I know how to share them with others?

May Mary, who gave Jesus her whole life, teach us to make everything an instrument of love.

After the Angelus

Dear Brothers and Sisters!

Last Friday in Bkerke, Lebanon, Patriarch Estephan El Douaihy was beatified. He led the Maronite Church with wisdom from 1670 to 1704 during a difficult time marked also by persecution. A teacher of the faith and an attentive pastor, he was a witness of hope always close to the people. Even today, the Lebanese people suffer so much! In particular, I think of the families of the victims of the explosion at the Port of Beirut. I hope that justice and truth will soon be done. May the new Blessed sustain the faith and hope of the Church in Lebanon, and intercede for this beloved country. Let us applaud the new Blessed!

I am following with great concern what is taking place in the Middle East, and I hope that the conflict, already terribly bloody and violent, will not spread even further. I pray for all the victims, especially the innocent children, and express my sympathy to the Druze community in the Holy Land and the populations in Palestine, Israel, and Lebanon. Let us not forget Myanmar. Let us have the courage to resume dialogue so that there is an immediate ceasefire in Gaza and on all fronts, the hostages are freed, and the people are helped with humanitarian aid. Attacks, even targeted ones, and killings can never be a solution. They do not help to walk in the path of justice, the path of peace, but generate even more hatred and revenge. Enough, brothers and sisters! Enough! Do not stifle the word of the God of Peace, but let it be the future of the Holy Land, the Middle East and the entire world! War is a defeat!

I am equally concerned about Venezuela, which is experiencing a critical situation. I make a heartfelt appeal to all parties to seek the truth, to exercise restraint, to avoid any kind of violence, to settle disputes through dialogue, to have at heart the true good of the people and not partisan interests. Let us entrust the country to the intercession of Our Lady of Coromoto, so loved and venerated by Venezuelans, and to the prayer of Blessed José Gregorio Hernandez, whose witness unites us all.

I express my closeness to the people of India, especially Kerala, who have been hard hit by torrential rains, which have caused numerous landslides, resulting in the loss of life, many displaced persons and extensive damage. I invite you to join me in my prayers for those who have lost their lives and for all those affected by such a devastating calamity.

Today, the memorial of the Holy Curé d'Ars, some countries celebrate the "feast of the parish priest." I express

my closeness and also my gratitude to all those parish priests who with zeal and generosity, at times amidst much suffering, offer themselves for God and the people. Let us applaud our parish priests!

I greet you, Romans and pilgrims from Italy and from many countries, especially the group from the Czech Republic, the Companions of Saint Ursula, the faithful from Chiusa Sclafani and Siderno, the young people from San Vito dei Normanni, the young men from the Sacro Cuore parish in Padua and the bicyclists from Sambuceto. With joy I send greetings to the participants in the First Youth Festival of Portugal being held in Fatima. Dear young people, I see that last year's enthusiastic experience in Lisbon continues to bear fruit. Thanks be to God! I pray for you and please pray for me at the Chapel of the Apparitions.

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