



SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE **BOLLETTINO**

HOLY SEE PRESS OFFICE BUREAU DE PRESSE DU SAINT-SIÈGE PRESSEAMT DES HEILIGEN STUHL
OFICINA DE PRENSA DE LA SANTA SEDE SALA DE IMPRENSA DA SANTA SÉ
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N. 240901a

Sunday 01.09.2024

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 fifteen thousand faithful and pilgrims in Saint Peter's Square.

The following are the Pope's words of introduction to the Marian prayer:

Dear brothers and sisters, happy Sunday!

Today, in the Gospel of the liturgy (cf. *Mk* 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23), Jesus speaks about the pure and the impure: a matter very dear to his contemporaries, which was linked principally to the observance of rites and rules of behaviour, to avoid any contact with things or persons considered unclean and, if this happened, to erase the "stain" (cf. *Lev* 11-15). Purity and impurity were almost an obsession for some religious of those times.

Some scribes and Pharisees, obsessive, strict observers of such norms, accuse Jesus of allowing his disciples to eat with unwashed hands, without washing their hands. And Jesus takes this reproach on the part of the Pharisees to His disciples to talk to us about the meaning of "purity".

Purity, Jesus says, is not linked to external rites, but is first and foremost linked to inner dispositions, interior dispositions. To be pure, therefore, it is no use washing one's hands several times if one then, within the heart, harbours evil feelings such as greed, envy or pride, or evil intentions such as deceit, theft, betrayal and slander (cf. *Mk* 7:21-22). Jesus draws attention to the need to beware of ritualism, which does not make one grow in goodness; on the contrary, this ritualism can sometimes lead one to neglect, or even justify, in oneself and in others, choices and attitudes contrary to charity, which wound the soul and close the heart.

And this, brothers and sisters, is important for us too: one cannot, for example, leave Holy Mass and, still in front of the church, stop and gossip wickedly and mercilessly about everything and everyone. That chatter that ruins the heart, that ruins the soul. And you can't do this! If you go to Mass and then do these things at the entrance, it is a bad thing! Or to show oneself to be pious in prayer, but then treat one's own relatives at home with coldness

and detachment, or neglect their elderly parents, who are in need of help and company (cf. *Mk* 7:10-13). This is a double life, and one cannot do this. And this is what the Pharisees did. External purity, without good attitudes, merciful attitudes towards others. One cannot be apparently very decent to everyone, and perhaps even do a bit of voluntary work and some philanthropic gestures, but then inwardly cultivate hatred towards others, despise the poor and the least, or behave dishonestly in one's work.

In acting in this way, the relationship with God is reduced to external gestures, and within one remains impervious to the purifying action of His grace, indulging in thoughts, messages and behaviour without love. We are made for something else. We are made for the purity of life, for tenderness, for love.

Let us ask ourselves, then: do I live my faith in a consistent manner, that is, what I do in Church, do I try to do outside in the same spirit? By my sentiments, words and deeds, do I make what I say in prayer tangible in closeness and respect for my brothers and sisters? Let us think about this.

And may Mary, Mother most pure, help us to make our life, in heartfelt and practiced love, worship pleasing to God (cf. *Rm* 12:1).

After the Angelus

Dear brothers and sisters!

Yesterday in *Šaštín*, in Slovakia, Ján Havlik, seminarian of the Congregation of the Mission, founded by Saint Vincent de Paul, was beatified. This young man was killed in 1965, during the persecution against the Church by the regime in what was then Czechoslovakia. May his perseverance in bearing witness to faith in Christ encourage those who still suffer similar trials. A round of applause for the new Blessed!

I have learned with sorrow that on Saturday 24 August, in the municipality of Barsalogho, in Burkina Faso, hundreds of people, including women and children, were killed and many others injured in a terrorist attack. In condemning these heinous attacks against human life, I express my closeness to the nation as a whole, and my heartfelt condolences to the families of the victims. May the Virgin Mary help the beloved people of Burkina Faso to regain peace and security.

I also pray for the victims of the accident that occurred in the Sanctuary of *Nossa Senhora da Conceição*, in the city of Recife in Brazil. May the Risen Lord console the injured and the relatives of the victims.

And I am always close to the tormented Ukrainian people, hard hit by attacks on the energy infrastructure. Besides causing deaths and injuries, they have left over a million people without electricity and water. Let us remember that the voice of the innocent is always heard by God, who does not remain indifferent to their suffering!

I once again turn my thoughts with concern to the conflict in Palestine and Israel, which risks spreading to other Palestinian cities. I appeal for the negotiations to continue and for an immediate ceasefire, the release of hostages, and relief to the people of Gaza, where many diseases are also spreading, such as poliomyelitis. May there be peace in the Holy Land, may there be peace in Jerusalem! May the Holy City be a place of encounter where Christians, Jews and Muslims feel they are respected and welcomed, and no-one questions the Status Quo in the respective Holy Places.

Today we celebrate *World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation*. I hope that everyone, institutions, associations, families and every person, may make a concrete commitment to our common home. The cry of the wounded Earth is becoming increasingly alarming, and calls for decisive and urgent action.

Tomorrow I will begin an Apostolic Journey in several countries in Asia and Oceania. Please, pray for the outcome of this journey!

I greet you all, Romans and pilgrims! In particular, I greet the young people of Lucca, accompanied by Archbishop Paolo Giulietti and several priests; I greet the good young people of the *Immacolata* and the youngsters of Campocroce di Mirano.

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