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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 twenty-five thousand faithful and pilgrims gathered 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 the Gospel of the liturgy (*Jn* 18:33-37) shows us Jesus before Pontius Pilate. He has been handed over to the Roman procurator to be condemned to death. However, a brief dialogue begins between the two, between Jesus and Pilate. Through Pilate's questions and the Lord's answers, two words in particular are transformed, acquiring new meaning. Two words: the word "*king*" and the word "*world*."

At first Pilate asks Jesus, "Are you the *king* of the Jews?" (v. 33). Thinking as an official of the empire does, he wants to understand whether the man in front of him is potentially threatening. For him, a king is the authority that rules over all his subjects. And this would be a menace for him, would it not? Jesus claims to be king, yes, but in quite another way! Jesus is a king insofar as he is a witness: he is the One who speaks the truth (cf. v. 37). The kingly power of Jesus, the Word incarnate, lies in his true word, in his effective word, that transforms the world.

The World: this is the second word. Pontius Pilate's "world" is one where the strong triumph over the weak, the rich over the poor, the violent over the meek. A world, in other words, which we know well, unfortunately. Jesus is King, but his kingdom is not of Pilate's world, and not of this world either (v. 36). Jesus' world, indeed, is the new world, the eternal world, which God prepares for all by giving his life for our salvation. It is the kingdom of heaven, which Christ brings to this earth by pouring out grace and truth (cf. *Jn*. 1:17). The world, of which Jesus is King, redeems creation ruined by evil with the power proper to divine love. Jesus saves creation, because Jesus liberates, Jesus forgives, Jesus brings peace and justice. "But is this true Father?" – "Yes". How is your

soul? Is there something heaving it down? Some old sin? Jesus always forgives. This is the kingdom of Jesus. If there is something ugly within you, ask for forgiveness. And He always forgives.

Brothers and sisters, Jesus speaks to Pilate from up close, but the latter remains distant from him because he lives in a different world. Pilate does not open himself to the truth, even though it is right in front of him. He will let Jesus be crucified. He will order “The King of the Jews” (Jn 19:19) to be written above the cross, but without understanding the meaning of this word: “King of the Jews”, of these words. Yet Christ came into the world, into this world. The one who is from the truth, listens to his voice (cf. Jn 18:37). It is the voice of the King of the universe, who saves us.

Brothers and sisters, listening to the Lord brings light into our hearts and into our lives. So, let us try to ask ourselves – everyone ask themselves in their own heart: can I say that Jesus is my “king”? Or do I have other “kings” in my heart? In what sense? Is His Word my guide, my certainty? Do I see in Him the merciful face of God who always forgives, always forgives, who is waiting for us to give us his forgiveness?

Let us pray together to Mary, the handmaid of the Lord, as we await the Kingdom of God with hope.

After the Angelus

Today these two young Koreans have taken the Cross used during World Youth Day, which will be in Seoul. They will take it to Korea to prepare for the World Youth Day. A round of applause for the Koreans! And also a round of applause to the Portuguese youth who have returned the Cross.

Yesterday, in Barcelona, priest Cayetano Clausellas Ballvé and the faithful layman Antonio Tort Reixachs were beatified. They were killed, in hatred of the faith, in Spain, in 1936. Let us give thanks to God for the great gift of these exemplary witnesses to Christ and the Gospel. Let us applaud the new Blessed!

Today the 39th World Youth Day is being celebrated in specific Churches, with the theme: “*They that hope in the Lord will walk and not grow faint*” (cf. Is 40:31). Even young people get tired at times, if they do not hope in the Lord! I greet the delegations from Portugal and South Korea, who “passed on the torch” of preparations, for the WYD in Seoul in 2027. A round of applause for the two delegations.

As I have already announced, on the next 27th of April, during the Jubilee of Adolescents, I will proclaim Blessed Carlo Acutis a Saint. Also, having been informed by the Dicastery for the Causes of Saints that the process of study of the Cause of Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati is about to be successfully concluded, I plan to canonize him on the next 3rd of August, during the Jubilee of Young People, after having received an opinion from the Cardinals. A round of applause for the soon to be new saints.

Tomorrow Myanmar celebrates its National Feast Day, in remembrance of the first student protest that set the country on its way to independence, and in the prospect of a peaceful and democratic season that it is still struggling to achieve today. I express my closeness to the entire population of Myanmar, particularly to those who are suffering for the ongoing fights, especially my closeness to the most vulnerable: to the children, the elderly, the sick and all refugees, including the Rohingya. To all parties involved, I make a heartfelt appeal: may all weapons be silenced and may a sincere and inclusive dialogue be opened, that may ensure a lasting peace.

And I warmly greet all of you, Roman faithful and pilgrims. In particular, I greet the groups of the faithful coming from Malta, Israel, Slovenia and Spain, as well as from the dioceses of Mostar-Duvno and Trebinje-Mrkan and from the territory of the Abbey of Fossanova.

And let us continue to pray for martyred Ukraine, that is suffering so much, let us pray for Palestine, for Israel, for Lebanon, for Sudan. Let us ask for peace.

And to everyone, I wish everyone a happy Sunday. Please don't forget to pray for me.

Have a good lunch and *arrivederci*!
