



SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE **BOLLETTINO**

HOLY SEE PRESS OFFICE BUREAU DE PRESSE DU SAINT-SIÈGE PRESSEAMT DES HEILIGEN STUHLS
OFICINA DE PRENSA DE LA SANTA SEDE SALA DE IMPRENSA DA SANTA SÉ
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N. 241229b

Sunday 29.12.2024

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 thirty 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 we celebrate the Holy Family of Nazareth. The Gospel tells of when Jesus, at the age of twelve, at the end of the annual pilgrimage to Jerusalem, went missing from Mary and Joseph, who found Him afterwards in the Temple conversing with the teachers (cf. *Lk* 2:41-52). The Evangelist Luke reveals the state of mind of Mary who asks Jesus, "Son, why have you done this to us? Your father and I have been looking for you with great anxiety" (v. 48). And Jesus replies, "Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" (v. 49).

It is an almost commonplace experience of a family that alternates between calm moments and dramatic ones. It appears to be the story of a family crisis, a crisis of our times, of a difficult teenager and two parents who are unable to understand him. Let us pause to look at this family. Do you know why the Family of Nazareth is a model? Because it is a family that converses, that listens, that talks. Dialogue is an important element for a family! A family that does not communicate cannot be a happy family.

It is good when a mother does not start with a rebuke, but with a question. Mary does not accuse and does not judge, but tries to understand how to accept this Son who is so different by listening. Despite this effort, the Gospel says that Mary and Joseph "did not understand what He said to them" (v. 50), showing that in the family it is more important to listen than to understand. Listening is giving importance to the other, recognizing his or her right to exist and think autonomously. Children need this. Think carefully, parents: listen to your children, who need this!

Mealtimes are a special moment for dialogue in the family. It is good to stay together around the table and to speak. This can solve many problems, and above all unite the generations: children who speak with their parents, grandchildren who speak with their grandparents... Never remain closed in on yourself or, even worse, with your head turned to your mobile phone. This will not do, never, never this. Talk, listen to each other, this is the dialogue that is good for you and that makes you grow!

The Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph is *holy*. And yet we have seen that even Jesus' parents did not always understand Him. We can reflect on this, and let us not be surprised if at times it happens that we do not understand each other. When it happens, let us ask ourselves: have we listened to each other? Do we confront problems by listening to each other or do we close up in silence, at times in resentment and pride? Do we take a little time to converse? What we can learn from the Holy Family today is mutual listening.

Let us entrust ourselves to the Virgin Mary and ask for our families the gift of listening.

After the Angelus

Dear brothers and sisters!

A cordial welcome to you all, Romans and pilgrims. Today I address a special greeting to the families present here, and to those connected from home via the media. The family is the cell of society, it is a precious treasure to support and protect!

My thoughts turn to the many families in South Korea who are mourning today following the dramatic air accident. I join in prayer for the survivors and for the departed.

And let us also pray for the families who are suffering because of wars: in tormented Ukraine, Palestine, Israel, Myanmar, Sudan, North Kivu: let us pray for all these families caught up in war.

I greet the faithful of Pero-Cerchiate, the group of the Deanery of Varese, the young people of Cadoneghe and San Pietro in Cariano; the candidates for Confirmation of Clusone, Chiudono, Adrara San Martino and Almenno San Bartolomeo; and the Scouts from Latina, Vasto and Soviore. And I greet the young people of the *Immacolata*!

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