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The Pope's words at the Angelus prayer

Before the Angelus

After the Angelus

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 faithful and pilgrims gathered in St. Peter's Square.

The following is the Pope's introduction to the Marian prayer:

Before the Angelus

Dear brothers and sisters, good morning!

This Sunday's Gospel reading (cf. *Mt* 18: 21-35) offers us a teaching on forgiveness, which does not deny the wrong suffered but recognises that the human being, created in the image of God, is always greater than the evil he commits. Saint Peter asked Jesus, "Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?" (v. 21). To Peter it seems that the maximum is to forgive the same person seven times; and perhaps for us it already seems too much to do so twice. But Jesus answers, "I do not say to you seven times, but seventy-seven times" (v. 22), that is, always: you must always forgive. And He confirms this by telling the parable of the merciful king and the unforgiving servant, which shows the inconsistency of he who is first forgiven and then refuses to forgive.

The king in the parable is a generous man who, gripped by compassion, remits an enormous debt — "ten thousand talents": enormous — to a servant who entreats him. However, that same servant, as soon as he meets a fellow servant who owes him one hundred denarii — that is, far less —, behaves mercilessly, having him thrown into prison. The inconsistent attitude of this servant is also ours, when we refuse to forgive our brothers.

However, the king of the parable is the image of God, Who loves us with a love so rich in mercy so as to receive us, love us and forgive us continually.

Ever since our Baptism God has forgiven us, remitting an insoluble debt: original sin. But that is the first time. Then, with limitless mercy, He forgives us all our faults as soon as we show even a small sign of remorse. Thus is God: merciful. When we are tempted to close our heart to those who have offended us and who ask us for forgiveness, let us remember the words of the heavenly Father to the unforgiving servant: "I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. And should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?" (v. 32-33). Whoever has experienced the joy, peace and inner freedom that comes from being forgiven can open themselves to the possibility of forgiving in turn.

In the *Lord's Prayer*, Jesus wished to include the same teaching as this parable. He places in direct relation the forgiveness we ask of God and the forgiveness we must grant to our brothers. "Forgive us our debts, as we have also forgiven our debtors" (*Mt 6, 12*). God's forgiveness is the sign of His superabundant love for each one of us; it is the love that leaves us free to distance ourselves, like the prodigal son, but that awaits our return every day; it is the enterprising love of the shepherd for his lost sheep; it is the tenderness that welcomes every sinner who knocks at the door. The heavenly Father – our Father – is full, He is full of love and wants to offer it to us, but cannot do so if we close our heart to love for others.

May the Virgin Mary always help us to be increasingly aware of the gratuitousness and greatness of the forgiveness received from God, to become merciful like Him, the good Father, slow to anger and great in love.

After the Angelus

Dear brothers and sisters,

I greet all of you with affection, Romans and pilgrims from different Countries: families, parish groups, associations.

I greet the faithful of La Plata, Argentina, officials of the Military School of Colombia, and catechists from Rho.

I greet the participants in the Via Pacis half marathon, which passes by places of worship of the different religious confessions present in Rome. I hope that this cultural and sporting initiative may favour dialogue, co-existence and peace.

I greet the many young people from Loreto, accompanied by the Franciscan brothers, who have today started a day of reflection and meditation: you bring us the "perfume" of the Shrine of the Holy House, thank you! I also greet the Pro Loco volunteers and the walkers who today begin their relay for Assisi. Have a good walk!

I wish you all a good Sunday and please, do not forget to pray for me. Have a good lunch, and goodbye.
