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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 Saint Peter's Square.

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

Before the Angelus

Dear brothers and sisters, good morning!

On this first Sunday after Christmas, we celebrate the Holy Family of Nazareth, and the Gospel invites us to reflect on the experience of Mary, Joseph and Jesus, as they grow together as a family in mutual love and in trust in God. The rite performed by Mary and Joseph, with the offering of their son Jesus to God, is the expression of this trust. The Gospel says: "They brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord" (*Lk 2: 22*), as required by the Mosaic law. Jesus' parents go to the temple to confirm that their son belongs to God and that they are the custodians of his life, not the proprietors. And this makes us reflect. All parents are custodians of the life of their children, not the proprietors, and they must help them to grow and to mature.

This gesture underlines that God alone is the Lord of individual and family history; everything comes to us from Him. Every family is called to acknowledge this primacy, protecting and educating children to open themselves to God Who is the very source of life. From here we find the secret of inner youth, witnessed paradoxically in the Gospel by a couple of elderly people, Simeon and Anna. The old Simeon, in particular, inspired by the Holy Spirit, says about the child Jesus: "Behold, this child is appointed for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for

a sign that is opposed ... so that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed" (vv. 34-35).

These prophetic words reveal that Jesus came to bring down the false images we make of God and also of ourselves; to "contradict" the worldly securities on which we attempt to lean; to make us "rise again" to a genuine human and Christian way, founded on values of the Gospel. There is no family situation that is precluded from this new way of rebirth and resurrection. And every time families, including those wounded and marked by frailty, failures and difficulties, turn to the source of Christian experience, new ways and unimaginable possibilities open.

Today's Gospel account says that Mary and Joseph "when they had performed everything according to the Law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. And the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom. And the favour of God was upon him" (vv. 39-40). A great joy of the family is raising children, as we all know. They are destined to develop and to grow strong, to acquire wisdom and receive God's grace, just as Jesus did. He is truly one of us: the Son of God makes Himself a child, accepts to grow, to become stronger; He is full of wisdom and the grace of God is upon Him. Mary and Joseph have the joy of seeing all this in their Son; and this is the mission to which the family is oriented: to create the favourable conditions for the harmonious and full growth of their children so that they can live a good life, worthy of God and constructive for the world.

This is my wish for all families, accompanying it with the invocation to Mary, Queen of the Family.

After the Angelus

Dear brothers and sisters,

I express my closeness to the Coptic Orthodox brothers of Egypt, affected two days ago by two attacks on a church and a shop on the outskirts of Cairo. May the Lord receive the souls of the deceased; sustain the wounded, families and the whole community, and convert the hearts of the violent.

Today I address a special greeting to the families present here, and also to those taking part from home. May the Holy Family bless you and guide you on your way.

I greet all of you, Romans and pilgrims, in particular, the parish groups, associations and young people. On this day, let us not forget to thank God for the past year and for every good received. And it will be good for every one of us to take some time to think how many good things we have received from the Lord this year and to be grateful. And we should also be grateful if there were trials and difficulties because He helped us to overcome those moments. Today is a day of thanksgiving.

I wish you all a happy Sunday and a serene end of the year. I thank you again for your good wishes and your prayers: and please continue to pray for me. Have a good lunch and goodbye!
