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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!

At the centre of this Sunday's Gospel (cf. *Mk* 12: 28b-34), there is the commandment to love: *love for God and for neighbour*. A scribe asks Jesus: "Of all the commandments, which is the most important?" (v. 28). He answers by quoting that profession of faith with which every Israelite begins and ends the day, and which starts with the words, "Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one" (*Dt* 6: 4). Thus Israel safeguards its faith in the fundamental reality of the whole of its creed: there is only one Lord and that Lord is "ours," in the sense that He bound Himself to us with an indissoluble pact; He has loved us, He loves us and He will love us forever. It is from this source, this love of God that the twofold Commandment stems: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength. [...] You shall love your neighbour as yourself" (vv. 30-31).

Choosing these two Words addressed by God to His people and, putting them together, Jesus taught once and for all that love of God and love of neighbour are inseparable; rather, more than that, they support one another. Although placed in sequence, they are the two faces of the same coin: lived together they are the believer's true

strength! To love God is to live of Him, for Him, for what He is and for what He does. And our God is donation without reserve; He is unlimited forgiveness; He is a relationship that promotes and makes one grow. Therefore, to love God means to invest one's energies every day to be His collaborators in serving our neighbour without reserve, in seeking to forgive without limits and in cultivating relationships of communion and fraternity.

The evangelist Mark is not concerned with specifying who my neighbour is, because my neighbour is the person I meet on the way during my days. It is not about pre-selecting my neighbour: this is not Christian, it is pagan. It is about having the eyes to see him and the heart to wish him well. If we train ourselves to see with Jesus' eyes, we will always listen to, and be beside, those in need. Our neighbours needs certainly require effective answers, but first of all they call for sharing. With an image we can say the hungry person needs not only a plate of soup but also a smile, to be heard, and also a prayer, perhaps together. Today's Gospel invites us all to be projected not only to the urgencies of our poorest brothers but especially to be attentive to their need of fraternal closeness, the meaning of life and tenderness. This challenges our Christian communities: it is about avoiding the risk of being communities that live of many initiatives but few relationships; the risk of being "service station" communities, but of little company, in the full and Christian sense of this term.

God, Who is love, created love for us so that we can love others, remaining united to Him. It would be illusory to pretend to love our neighbour without loving God, and it would also be illusory to pretend to love God without loving our neighbour. The two dimensions of love, of God and of neighbour, characterize in their unity the disciple of Christ.

May the Virgin Mary help us to welcome and witness this luminous teaching in our everyday life.

After the Angelus

Dear brothers and sisters,

I wish to express my sorrow for the terrorist attack on the Coptic Orthodox Church in Egypt two days ago. I pray for the victims, pilgrims killed for the mere fact of being Christians, and I ask that Mary Most Holy console the families and the entire community. Let us pray together to Our Lady: Hail Mary...

Yesterday, in the Basilica of Saint John Lateran, Mother Clelia Merloni was proclaimed Blessed. The founder of the Sisters Apostles of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, she was a woman who surrendered fully to the will of God, zealous in charity, patient in adversity and heroic in forgiveness. Let us give thanks to God for the shining evangelical witness of the new Blessed, and let us follow her example of goodness and mercy. Applause for the new Blessed!

I greet you all, Romans and pilgrims, especially the students from Vienna, young people of the *Opera Giorgio La Pira* of Florence, young families from Raldon, Verona, the faithful of Milan, Petosino and Civitanova Marche, of the diocese of Ozieri, the Oratory of Carugate, and the young confirmands of Longare and Modena.

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