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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 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 second Sunday of Ordinary Time is in continuity with the Epiphany and the Feast of the Baptism of Jesus. The Gospel passage (cf. *Jn* 1: 29-34) again speaks to us of the manifestation of Jesus. Indeed, after being baptized in the River Jordan, He was consecrated by the Holy Spirit Who came upon Him, and was proclaimed Son of God by the voice of the heavenly Father (cf. *Mt* 3: 16-17 *et seq.*). The Evangelist John, unlike the other three, does not describe the event, but proposes to us the *witness* of John the Baptist. He was the first witness of Christ. God had called him and prepared him for this.

The Baptist cannot hold back the urgent desire to bear witness to Jesus and declares: "I have seen and have borne witness" (v. 34). John saw something shocking, that is, the beloved Son of God in solidarity with sinners; and the Holy Spirit made him understand this unheard-of novelty, a true reversal. In fact, while in all religions it is man who offers and sacrifices something to God, in the event Jesus is God Who offers His Son for the salvation of humanity. John manifests his astonishment and his consent to this newness brought by Jesus, through a meaningful expression that we repeat each time in the Mass: "Behold the Lamb of God, Who takes away the sin of the world!" (v. 29).

The testimony of John the Baptist invites us to start out again and again on our journey of faith: to start afresh from Jesus Christ, the Lamb full of mercy that the Father gave for us. Let us be surprised once again by God's choice to be on our side, to show solidarity with us sinners, and to save the world from evil by taking it on fully.

Let us learn from John the Baptist *not to assume that we already know Jesus*, that we already know everything about Him (cf. v. 31). This is not so. Let us pause with the Gospel, perhaps even contemplating an icon of Christ, a “Holy face”. Let us contemplate with our eyes and yet more with our hearts; and let us allow ourselves to be instructed by the Holy Spirit, Who tells us inside: It is He! He is the Son of God made lamb, immolated out of love. He alone has brought, He alone has suffered, He alone has atoned for sin, the sin of each one of us, the sin of the world, and also my sins. All of them. He brought them all upon Himself and took them away from us, so that we would finally be free, no longer slaves to evil. Yes, we are still poor sinners, but not slaves, no, not slaves: children, children of God!

May the Virgin Mary obtain for us the strength to bear witness to her Son Jesus; to proclaim Him with joy with a life freed from evil and a word full of astonished and grateful faith.

After the Angelus

Dear brothers and sisters,

A conference is being held today in Berlin to discuss the crisis in Libya. I very much hope that this summit, which is so important, will be the beginning of a path towards an end to the violence and a negotiated solution leading to peace and the much-desired stability of the country.

I greet all of you, dear pilgrims and faithful Romans. In particular, the members of some Brotherhoods of Seville, Spain; the faithful of Bielsko-Biala and Poznań, Poland; the students of Loras College in Dubuque, United States, and those of Vila Pouca de Aguiar, Portugal.

I greet the parish groups of Scandicci and Quarto d’Altino, those of *San Giuseppe al Trionfale* and *San Melchiade* in Rome, as well as the altar servers of Corva, diocese of Concordia-Pordenone, with their families.

I am pleased to recall that 2020 has been internationally designated “Year of the Nurse and Midwife”. Nurses are the most numerous healthcare workers, and those closest to the sick, and midwives carry out perhaps the noblest of the professions. Let us pray for all of them, that they may do their precious work in the best possible way.

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