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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 Saint Peter's Square.

The following are the Pope's words of introduction to the Marian prayer:

Before the Angelus

Dear brothers and sisters, *buongiorno!*

The Gospel for this Sunday's Liturgy tells us about a turning point. This is what it says: "When the days drew near for him to be received up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem" (Lk 9:51). Thus he begins his "great journey" toward the Holy City which required a special decision because it was his last one. Filled with a still too worldly enthusiasm, the disciples dream that the Master is going to meet with triumph. Instead, Jesus knows that rejection and death await him in Jerusalem (cf. Lk 9:22, 43b-45); he knows he will have to suffer a great deal. This is what demands a *resolute decision*. And so, Jesus goes forward taking decisive steps toward Jerusalem. This is the same decision we must make if we want to be disciples of Jesus. What does this decision consist of? For we must be serious disciples of Jesus, truly decisive, not "lukewarm", as an old woman I knew used to say. No! Decisive Christians. And the episode the Evangelist Luke narrates right after this helps us understand.

They set out on their journey. A village of Samaritans, having learned that Jesus was headed toward Jerusalem — which was the city of their adversaries — does not welcome him. Outraged, the Apostles James and John suggest to Jesus that he should punish those people by raining fire from heaven down on them. Not only does Jesus not accept this proposal, he also rebukes the two brothers. They want to involve Jesus in their desire for revenge and he will have none of it (cf. vv. 52-55). The "fire" that Jesus came to bring on earth is something else (cf. Lk 12:49). It is the merciful Love of the Father. And it takes patience, constancy, and a penitential spirit to make this fire grow.

James and John, instead, allow themselves to be overcome by anger. This happens to us too when, despite doing something good, perhaps even with sacrifice, we find a closed door instead of being welcomed. So we get angry. We even try to involve God himself, threatening heavenly punishments. Jesus, instead, takes another route, not the path of anger, but that of a resolute decision to go forward, which, far from translating into harshness, implies calm, patience, forbearance, without however diminishing our commitment to doing good. This way of being does not connote weakness but, on the contrary, a tremendous inner strength. It is easy, it is instinctive, to allow ourselves to be overcome by anger when faced with opposition. What is difficult, instead, is to master oneself, doing as Jesus did, who, as the Gospel says, “went on to another village” (v. 56). This means that when we meet with opposition, we must turn toward doing good elsewhere, without recrimination. This is how Jesus helps us to be at peace; people who are happy with the good accomplished, and who do not seek human approval.

Now let us ask ourselves: At what point are we? What point are we at? In the face of opposition, misunderstanding, do we turn to the Lord? Do we ask him for his steadfastness in doing good? Or do we rather seek confirmation through applause, ending up being bitter and resentful when we do not hear it? How many times, more or less knowingly, do we seek applause, approval from others? Do we do things for applause? No, this is no good. We must do good out of service, not to seek applause. Sometimes we think that our fervour is due to a sense of justice for a good cause. But in reality, most of the time it is nothing other than pride, combined with weakness, susceptibility and impatience. Let us thus ask Jesus for the strength to be like him, to follow him resolutely down the path of service, not to be vindictive, not to be intolerant when difficulties present themselves, when we spend ourselves in doing good and others do not understand this, or even when they disqualify us. No, silence and onward.

May the Virgin Mary help us make the resolute decision Jesus made to remain in love until the end.

After the Angelus

Dear brothers and sisters, I am following with concern what is taking place in Ecuador. I am near to the people and I encourage all parties to abandon violence and extreme positions. Let us learn: only through dialogue can social peace be achieved — I hope soon — with particular attention to the marginalized populations and the poorest, but always respecting everyone’s rights and those of the country’s institutions.

I would like to express my closeness to the relatives and fellow sisters of Sister Luisa Dell’Orto, a Little Sister of the Gospel of Saint Charles de Foucauld, who was killed yesterday in Port-au-Prince, the capital of Haiti. For 20 years, Sister Luisa lived there, dedicated above all to serving children on the streets. I entrust her soul to God, and I pray for the Haitian people, especially for the least, so they might have a more serene future, without misery and without violence. Sister Luisa made a gift of her life to others even to martyrdom.

I greet all of you, people of Rome and pilgrims from Italy and so many countries. I see an Argentinian flag, my fellow citizens, I greet you. In particular, I greet the faithful from Lisbon, the students from the Notre-Dame de Sainte-Croix Institute of Neuilly in France, and those from Telfs, in Austria. I greet the members of the polyphonic choir from Riesi, the group of parents from Rovigo and the Blessed Serafino Morazzone pastoral community from Maggianico. I see Ukrainian flags there. Bombardments continue there in Ukraine which are causing death, destruction and suffering in the population. Please, let us not forget these people afflicted by the war. Let us not forget this in our heart and with our prayers.

I wish you all a happy Sunday. And, please, do not forget to pray for me. Enjoy your lunch. *Arrivederci!*
