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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 pilgrims and faithful 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!*

In the Gospel of today's Liturgy, Jesus speaks to the disciples to reassure them of any fear and to invite them to be vigilant. He addresses two fundamental exhortations to them: the first is, "Do not be afraid, little flock" (*Lk* 12:32); the second is, "Be ready" [literal translation of v.35 used in the Italian original]. "Do not be afraid" and "be ready". They are two key words for conquering the fears that paralyze us at times, and to overcome the temptation of a passive, slumbering life. "Do not be afraid" and "Be ready". Let us look at these two invitations.

Do not be afraid. First of all, Jesus encourages the disciples. He has just finished speaking to them about the loving and provident care of the Father, who cares for the lilies of the fields and the birds of the air, and therefore, all the more for his children. So there is no need to worry and fret for our lives are firmly in God's hands. We are heartened by Jesus' invitation not to fear. Indeed, at times we feel imprisoned by a feeling of distrust and anxiety. It is the fear of failure, of not being acknowledged and loved, the fear of not being able to realize our plans, of never being happy, and so on. And so, we struggle to find solutions, to find a space in which to get out of the cycle, to accumulate goods and wealth, to obtain security. And where does this take us? We end up living anxiously and constantly worrying. Instead, Jesus reassures us: Do not be afraid! Trust in the Father who wants to give you all you truly need. He has already given you his Son, his Kingdom, and he will always accompany you with his providence, taking care of you every day. Do not be afraid -- this is the certainty that your hearts should be attached to! Do not be afraid – a heart attached to this certainty. Do not be afraid.

But knowing that the Lord watches over us with love does not entitle us to slumber, to let ourselves succumb to laziness! On the contrary, we must be alert, vigilant. Indeed, to love means being attentive to the other, being aware of his or her needs, being willing to listen and welcome, being ready.

The second word. *Be ready*. This is the second invitation today. This is Christian wisdom. Jesus repeats this invitation several times. And today he does so through three short parables, centred on the master of a house who, in the first, returns unexpectedly from a wedding banquet; in the second, does not want to be surprised by thieves; and in the third, returns from a long journey. The message in all of them is it is necessary to *stay awake*, not to fall asleep, that is, not to be distracted, not to give in to inner idleness, because the Lord comes even in situations in which we do not expect him. To be attentive to the Lord, not to go to sleep. We need to stay alert.

And at the end of our life, he will call us to account for the goods he has entrusted to us. Therefore, being vigilant also means *being responsible*, that is, safeguarding and administering those goods faithfully. We have received so much: life, faith, family, relationships, work, but also the places where we live, our city, creation. We have received so many things. Let us try to ask ourselves: Do we take care of this inheritance the Lord has left us? Do we safeguard its beauty or do we use things only for ourselves and for our immediate convenience? We have to think a little about this – are we guardians of the creation that has been given to us?

Brothers and sisters, let us walk without fear, in the certainty that the Lord accompanies us always. And let us stay awake lest we be asleep when the Lord passes by. Saint Augustine used to say, “I am afraid that the Lord will pass by and I will not notice”. To be asleep, and not to notice that the Lord passes by. Stay alert! May the Virgin Mary help us, who welcomed the Lord’s visit and readily and generously said, “Here I am”.

After the Angelus

Dear brothers and sisters,

I want to welcome with satisfaction the departure of the first ships loaded with grain from the ports of Ukraine. This step demonstrates that it is possible to dialogue and to reach concrete results for everyone’s benefit. Therefore, this event also presents itself as a sign of hope, and I sincerely hope that, following in this direction, there might be an end to combat and that a just and lasting peace might be reached.

I sadly learned of the automotive accident that happened yesterday morning in Croatia. Some pilgrims going to Medjugorje lost their lives and others were wounded. May Our Lady intercede for all of them and for their relatives.

Today is the final day of the European Youth Pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela postponed from last year’s Holy Year of Compostela. With joy, I cordially bless each young person who has participated, and I bless also all who worked to organize and have accompanied this event. May your lives always be a journey, a journey with Jesus, a journey toward God and toward your brothers and sisters, a journey in service and in joy!

And I now extend my greeting to you, people from Rome and pilgrims from various countries, especially the faithful from Malta. I greet the group from Crevalcore, the young people from the diocese of Verona, and those from the Oratory of “Don Bosco” from Tollmezzo.

I wish all of you a good Sunday. Please do not forget to pray for me. Enjoy your meal and *arrivederci*

