



The Holy See

POPE FRANCIS

ANGELUS

Saint Peter's Square
Sunday, 3 October 2021

[[Multimedia](#)]

Dear brothers and sisters, *buongiorno!*

In the Gospel of today's Liturgy we see Jesus react somewhat unusually: He is indignant. And what is most surprising is that his indignation is not caused by the Pharisees who put him to the test with questions about the lawfulness of divorce, but by his disciples who, to protect him from the crowd of people, rebuke some children who had been brought to Jesus. In other words, the Lord is not angry with those who argue with him, but with those who, in order to relieve him of his burden, distance the children from him. Why? It is a good question: why does the Lord do this?

Let us remember — it was the Gospel reading of two Sundays ago — that while performing the gesture of embracing a child, Jesus had identified himself with the little ones: he had taught that it is indeed the little ones, namely, those who depend on others, who are in need and cannot reciprocate, that should be served first (cf. *Mk 9:35-37*). Those who seek God find him there, in the little ones, in those in need: in need not only of material goods, but of care and comfort, such as the sick, the humiliated, prisoners, immigrants, the incarcerated. He is there: in the little ones. This is why Jesus is indignant: any affront to a little one, a poor person, a child, a defenceless person, is done to him.

Today the Lord picks up this teaching again and completes it. In fact, he adds: "Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it" (*Mk 10:15*). Here is what is new: the disciple must not only serve the little ones, but also *acknowledge himself as a*

little one. And does each of us recognise ourselves as being little before God? Let us think about this, it will help us. Awareness of being little, awareness of being in need of salvation is indispensable in welcoming the Lord. It is the first step in opening ourselves up to him. Often, however, we forget about this. In prosperity, in well-being, we have the illusion of being self-sufficient, that we suffice to ourselves, that we do not need God. Brothers and sisters, this is a deception, because each one of us is a person in need, a little one. We must seek out our own smallness and recognise it. And there, we will find Jesus.

In life, recognising oneself as little, is a starting point for growing. If we think about it, we grow, not so much on the basis of our successes and the things we have, but above all in difficult and fragile moments. There, in our need, we mature; there we open our hearts to God, to others, to the meaning of life. Let us open our eyes to others. Let us open our eyes, when we are little, to the true meaning of life. When we feel small in the face of a problem, small in front of a cross, an illness, when we experience fatigue and loneliness, let us not be discouraged. The mask of superficiality is falling away and our radical fragility is re-emerging: it is our common ground, our treasure, because *with God frailty is not an obstacle but an opportunity*. This would be a beautiful prayer: “Lord, look at my frailties...” and list them before him. This is a good attitude before God.

Indeed, it is precisely in our frailty that we discover how much God takes care of us. The Gospel today says that Jesus is very tender with the little ones: “he took them in his arms and blessed them, laying his hands upon them” (v. 16). The difficulties and situations that reveal our frailties are privileged opportunities to experience his love. Those who pray with perseverance know this well: in dark or lonely moments, God’s tenderness towards us makes itself, so to speak, even more present. When we are little, we feel God’s tenderness more. This tenderness gives us peace; this tenderness makes us grow, because God draws close to us in his way, which is nearness, compassion and tenderness. And, when we feel we are little, small, for whatever reason, the Lord comes closer, we feel he is closer. He gives us peace; he makes us grow. In prayer the Lord draws us close to him, like a father with his child. This is how we grow: not in the illusory pretence of our self-sufficiency — this makes no one grow — but in the strength of placing all our hope in the Father, just like the little ones do; they do this.

Today let us ask the Virgin Mary for a huge grace, that of littleness: to be children who trust the Father, certain that he will not fail to take care of us.

After the Angelus, the Pope continued:

Dear brothers and sisters, I am very saddened by what happened in recent days in a prison in Guayaquil, Ecuador. A terrible outbreak of violence between inmates belonging to rival gangs has left more than a hundred dead and many injured. I pray for them and for their families. May God

help us heal the wounds of crime, that enslave the poorest. And may he help those who work every day to make prison life more humane.

I wish once again to implore from God the gift of peace for the beloved land of Myanmar: may the hands of those who live there no longer wipe away tears of pain and death, but instead join together to overcome difficulties and work together to bring peace.

Today, in Catanzaro, Maria Antonio Samà and Gaetana Tolomeo, two women condemned to physical immobility throughout their lives, will be beatified. Sustained by divine grace, they embraced the cross of their infirmity, transforming their pain into praise for the Lord. Their bed became a spiritual reference point and a place of prayer and Christian growth for many people who found comfort and hope there. Let us applaud the new Blessed!

On this first Sunday of October, our thoughts turn to the faithful gathered at the Shrine of Pompeii for the recitation of the Supplication to the Virgin Mary. During this month, let us renew together our commitment to praying the Holy Rosary.

I greet you, dear people of Rome and pilgrims! In particular, the faithful of Wépion, Diocese of Namur, in Belgium; the young people of Uzzano, in the diocese of Pescia; and young people with disabilities who have come from Modena, accompanied by the Little Sisters of Jesus the Worker and by volunteers. In this regard, today in Italy is the “Day for the Removal of Architectural Barriers”: everyone may lend a hand for a society where no one feels excluded. Thank you for your work.

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