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Regina Coeli: being Christians does not mean adhering to a culture or a doctrine, but bonding our life to Jesus

Vatican City, 16 May 2016 – At midday Pope Francis, after celebrating Holy Mass in the Vatican Basilica, appeared at the window of his study to pray the Regina Coeli with the faithful gathered in St. Peter's Square. He commented that on the Solemnity of Pentecost, which concludes Easter time, the liturgy invites us to open up to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, which Jesus asks of the Father in the Last Supper when He says to the disciples: "If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, to be with you forever".

"These words remind us, firstly, that love for a person, and even for the Lord, is shown not through words but in actions; and also that keeping the commandments is to be understood in an existential sense, so that all of life is involved. Indeed, being Christians does not mean principally being involved in a certain culture or adhering to a certain doctrine, but rather linking one's own life, in every aspect, to the person of Jesus and, through Him, to the Father. To this end Jesus promises the outpouring of the Holy Spirit to His disciples. In this way, thanks to the Holy Spirit, the Love that unites the Father and Son and proceeds from them, we are all able to live the same life as Jesus. Indeed, the Spirit teaches us everything, or rather the only thing necessary to us: to love as God loves."

When Jesus promises the Holy Spirit, He defines Him as "another Helper", another consoler, advocate, intercessor, or rather, He Who helps us, Who defends us, Who stays by our side in the journey of life and in the struggle for good against evil. Jesus says 'another Helper' as the first was Jesus Himself, made flesh precisely to take upon Himself our human condition and to free it from the slavery of sin."

In addition, the Holy Spirit "exercises a function of teaching and memory", the Pope emphasised. "Jesus said to us: 'but the Helper, the Holy Spirit, Whom the Father will send in my name, He will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you'. The Holy Spirit does not bring a different teaching, but renders Jesus' teaching living and functioning, so that the passage of time does not cancel it out or let it fade. The Holy Spirit implants this teaching in our heart, helping us to internalise it, making it part of us, flesh of our flesh. At the same time the Spirit prepares our heart so it is really able to receive the Lord's words and examples. Every time the word of Jesus is welcomed with joy in our heart, this is the work of the Holy Spirit."

"Let us pray together the Regina Coeli for the last time this year", he concluded, "invoking the maternal intercession of the Virgin Mary so that she may grant us the grace of being strongly inspired by the Holy Spirit, to bear witness to Christ with evangelical candour and to be ever more open to the fullness of His love".

After the Marian prayer, the Pope spoke about the publication of his message for the 90th World Mission Sunday, and asked the Holy Spirit to give strength to all the missionaries *ad gentes*, to support the Church's mission throughout the world, and to bring us strong young people, boys and girls, who wish to go and announce the Gospel".

He also greeted the participants in the Festival of Nations, which celebrates its 25th anniversary, in Rome's Piazza San Giovanni in Laterano, expressing his hope that this event may be a sign of the unity and diversity of cultures and help us to understand that the path to peace is this: making unity while respecting diversity.

Finally, he addressed the Alpini, gathered for their National Meeting in the Italian city of Asti, and encouraged them to be "witnesses of mercy and hope, following the example of Blessed Don Carlo Gnocchi, blessed Brother Luigi Bordino and the Venerable Teresio Olivelli, who honour the Alpine Corps with the holiness of their lives".
