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The Pope's words at the Regina Caeli prayer

At midday today, Monday of the Angel, the Holy Father Francis appeared at the window of his study in the Vatican Apostolic Palace to pray the *Regina Caeli* with the faithful and pilgrims in Saint Peter's Square.

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

Before the Regina Caeli

Dear brothers and sisters, *buongiorno*, and happy Easter!

Today, Monday of the Octave of Easter, the Gospel (cf. *Mt* 28:8.15) shows us the *joy* of the women at the Resurrection of Jesus: the text says they abandoned the tomb with "great joy", and "ran to tell His disciples" (v. 8). This joy, which is born precisely from the living encounter with the Risen One, is a powerful emotion, which impels them to spread and to tell what they have seen.

Sharing joy is a wondrous experience, which we learn from a very young age: think of a child who gets a good mark at school and cannot wait to show his or her parents, or a young person who achieves their first success in sport, or a family in which a child is born. Let us try to remember, each of us, a moment so happy that it was even difficult to put it into words, but which we wished to tell everyone about immediately!

So, the women, on Easter morning, live this experience, but in a much greater way. Why? Because the resurrection of Jesus is not just wonderful news or the happy ending of a story, but something that changes our lives completely, and changes it forever! It is the victory of life over death, this is the Resurrection of Jesus. It is the victory of hope over despondency. Jesus broke through the darkness of the tomb and lives forever: His presence can fill anything with light. With Him, every day becomes a step in an eternal journey, every "today" can hope for a "tomorrow", every end a new beginning, every instant is projected beyond the limits of time, towards eternity.

Brothers, sisters, the joy of the Resurrection is not something far away. It is very close, it is ours, because it was given to us on the day of our Baptism. Since then, we too, like the women, can meet the Risen One and He says to us, as He did to them: "Do not fear!" (v 10). Brothers and sisters, let us not give up the joy of Easter!

But how can we nurture this joy? Like the women did: by encountering the Risen One, because He is the source of a joy that never ceases. So, let us hasten to seek Him in the Eucharist, in His forgiveness, in prayer and in lived charity! Joy, when it is shared, grows. Let us share the joy of the Risen One.

And May the Virgin Mary, who at Easter rejoiced in her risen Son, help us to be joyful witnesses.

After the Regina Caeli

Dear brothers and sisters!

I renew my Easter greetings to all, and I sincerely thank those who, in various ways, have sent me messages of closeness and prayer. May the gift of the peace of the Risen Lord be granted to these individuals, families and communities. And may this gift of peace reach where it is most needed: to the peoples exhausted by war, by hunger, by every form of oppression.

And I greet you affectionately, Romans and pilgrims from various countries!

I greet the young people and the priests of the Blessed Carlo Gnocchi pastoral community in Inverigo, and those of the deanery of Appiano Gentile.

Happy Monday of the Angel! May the joy of Easter continue! Please, do not forget to pray for me. Enjoy your lunch, and *arrivederci*.
