



The Holy See

POPE FRANCIS

REGINA COELI

Saint Peter's Square

Easter Monday, 22 April 2019

[Multimedia]

Dear Brothers and Sisters, Good morning!

Today and throughout this entire week the paschal joy of Jesus' Resurrection, the incredible event which we commemorated yesterday, continues in the liturgy and also in life. During the Easter Vigil the words spoken by the Angels beside Jesus' empty tomb resonate. They asked the women who had gone to the sepulchre at the dawn of the first day after the Sabbath: "Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen" (Lk 24:5-6). Christ's Resurrection is the most unsettling event in the history of mankind, which attests the victory of God's love over sin and over death, and gives a rock solid foundation to our life's hope. What was humanly unthinkable has happened: "Jesus of Nazareth ... God raised him up, having loosed the pangs of death" (Acts 2:22-24).

On this "Monday of the Angel", the liturgy, with the Gospel of Matthew (cf. 28:8-15), takes us back to Jesus' empty tomb. It will do us good to go in thought to Jesus' empty tomb. The women, filled with fear and joy, depart quickly to go and bring the news to the disciples that the tomb is empty; and at that moment Jesus appears before them. "They came up and took hold of his feet and worshiped him" (v. 9). They touched him: it was not a ghost; it was Jesus, alive, in the flesh. It was him. Jesus drives fear from their hearts and encourages them even more to announce to the brethren what has happened. All the Gospels place emphasis on the role of women, Mary Magdalen and the others, as the first witnesses of the Resurrection. The men, fearful, were locked in the Upper Room. Peter and John, informed by Mary Magdalen, make only a quick remark in which they state that the tomb is open and empty. But it was the women who were first to encounter the Risen One and to bear the message that he is alive.

Today, dear brothers and sisters, the words Jesus addressed to the women resonate for us too: "Do not be afraid; go and tell..." (v. 10). After the rites of the Easter Triduum, which have allowed us to relive the mystery of the death and Resurrection of our Lord, with the eyes of faith we now contemplate him Risen and alive. We too are called to encounter him personally and to become his proclaimers and witnesses.

With the ancient liturgical Easter Sequence, in these days we repeat: "Christ, my hope, is risen!". And in Him, we too have risen, passing from death to life, from the slavery of sin to the freedom of love. Thus, let us allow ourselves to be touched by the consoling message of Easter and embraced by its glorious light, which dispels the darkness of fear and sorrow. The Risen Jesus walks beside us. He reveals himself to those who invoke him and love him. First in prayer, but also in the simple joys lived with faith and gratitude. We can also feel him present in moments of sharing warmth, welcome, friendship, and the contemplation of nature. May this day of celebration, in which it is customary to enjoy some leisure and gratuitousness, help us to experience Jesus' presence.

Let us ask the Virgin Mary that our hands may be filled with the gifts of the peace and serenity of the Risen One, so as to share them with our brothers and sisters, especially those who have greater need of comfort and hope.

After reciting the Regina Coeli, the Holy Father added:

Dear brothers and sisters, I would like to again express my spiritual and paternal closeness to the people of Sri Lanka. I am very close to my dear brother, Cardinal Malcolm Ranjith Patabendige Don, and to the entire Church of the Archdiocese of Colombo. I pray for the countless victims and wounded, and I ask everyone not to hesitate to offer all the help necessary to this dear nation. I likewise hope that everyone will condemn these never justifiable terrorist acts, inhuman acts. Let us pray to Our Lady....

[Hail Mary]

In the paschal climate that characterizes this day, I affectionately greet all of you, families, parish groups, associations and individual pilgrims, from Italy and from different parts of the world.

I hope each one will spend with faith these days of the Octave of Easter, in which the memory of Christ's Resurrection continues. May you seize every good opportunity to be witnesses to the joy and peace of the Risen Lord.

Happy and Holy Easter to all! Please, do not forget to pray for me. Enjoy your lunch. *Arrivederci!*

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