



The Holy See

POPE FRANCIS

REGINA CAELI

Saint Peter's Square
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The Gospel for today, the Sixth Sunday of Easter, speaks to us about the Holy Spirit, whom Jesus calls the *Paraclete* (cf. *Jn 14:15-17*). *Paraclete* is a word that comes from Greek, which means both *comforter* and *advocate* at the same time. This means that the Holy Spirit never leaves us alone, he is near to us, like a lawyer who assists the accused person, standing by his or her side. And he suggests to us how to defend ourselves from those who accuse us. Let us recall that the great accuser is always the devil, who puts sin inside of you, the desire to sin, wickedness. Let us reflect on these two aspects: his closeness to us, and his assistance against those who accuse us.

His *closeness* : The Holy Spirit, Jesus says, “dwells with you and will be in you” (cf. v. 17). He never abandons us. The Holy Spirit wants to stay with us; he is not a passing guest who comes to pay us a courtesy visit. He is a companion for life, a stable presence. He is Spirit and desires to dwell in our spirits. He is patient and stays with us even when we fall. He remains because he truly loves us; he does not pretend to love us, and then leaves us alone when things get difficult. No. He is loyal, he is transparent, he is authentic.

Indeed, if we find ourselves in a moment of trial, the Holy Spirit comforts us, bringing us God’s pardon and strength. And when he places our errors before us and corrects us, he does so gently — there is always the timbre of tenderness and the warmth of love in his voice that speaks to the heart. Certainly, the Paraclete Spirit is demanding, because he is a true, faithful friend, who does not hide anything, who suggests what we should change and how to grow. But when he corrects us, he never humiliates us, and never instils distrust. On the contrary, he conveys the certainty

that with God, we can always make it. This is his closeness. It is a beautiful certainty.

The Paraclete Spirit is the second aspect. He is our *advocate* and he defends us. He defends us from those who accuse us: from ourselves when we do not love and forgive ourselves, when we go so far as perhaps telling ourselves that we are failures and good for nothing; from the world who discards those who do not fit into its patterns and models; from the devil who is the “accuser” *par excellence* and the divider (cf. *Rev 12:10*), and does everything to make us feel incapable and unhappy.

In the face of all these accusing thoughts, the Holy Spirit suggests to us how to respond. How? The Paraclete, Jesus says, is the One who “reminds us of everything Jesus told us” (cf. *Jn 14:26*). He *reminds* us, therefore, of the words of the Gospel, and thus enables us to respond to the accusing devil, not with our own words, but with the Lord’s own words. He reminds us, above all, that Jesus always spoke of the Father who is in heaven, he made the Father known to us, and revealed the Father’s love for us, who are his children. If we call on the Spirit, we will learn to embrace and recall the most important reality of life that protects us from the accusations of evil. And what is the most important reality in life? That we are beloved children of God. We are God’s beloved children: this is the most important reality, and the Spirit reminds us of this.

Brothers and sisters, let us ask ourselves today: Do we call on the Holy Spirit? Do we pray to him often? Let us not forget about the one who is close to us, or rather, is within us! Then: Do we listen to his voice, both when he encourages us and when he corrects us? Do we respond with Jesus’ words to the accusations from the evil one, to the “tribunals” of life? Do we remember that we are beloved children of God? May Mary make us docile to the voice of the Holy Spirit and sensitive to his presence.

After praying the Regina Caeli, the Holy Father continued:

Dear brothers and sisters, in the past few days, we have once again witnessed armed conflict between Israelis and Palestinians in which innocent people have lost their lives, including women and children. I hope that the ceasefire that was recently reached will become stable, that weapons will be silenced, because security and stability will never be obtained through weapons, but on the contrary, all hope of peace will also continue to be destroyed.

I offer a heartfelt greeting to all of you, people of Rome and pilgrims from Italy and many other countries, in particular, the faithful from Canada, Singapore, Malaysia and Spain.

I greet the leaders of the Community of Sant’Egidio from 25 African countries, as well as the Administration and Professors from the University of Radom in Poland. I greet Caritas

Internationalis which has convened and elected a new president. Move forward with courage on the way of reform!

I greet the faithful from Scandicci and from Torrita di Siena; the youth from the Deanery of Appiano Gentile, the Agesci Scouts from Alghero, and young people from Senigallia; the “John XXIII” Scholastic Institute from Cammarata; and participants in the relay for life, supporting the Foundation for Cancer Research.

Mother’s Day is being celebrated in many countries today. Let us gratefully and affectionately remember all mothers — those who are still with us and those who have gone to heaven. Let us entrust them to Mary, the mother of Jesus and let us give them a big round of applause!

Let us turn to her asking her to alleviate the suffering of battered Ukraine and of all the nations wounded by war and violence.

I wish everyone a happy Sunday. And I greet the youth of the Immacolata group, who are wonderful! Please do not forget to pray for me. Enjoy your lunch. *Arrivederci!*