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Regina Coeli: Francis expresses his closeness to those affected by the attack in Lahore

Vatican City, 28 March 2016 – "On this Easter Monday ... let us pause before Jesus' empty tomb, and meditate with wonder and gratitude the great mystery of the Resurrection of the Lord. Life has conquered death. Mercy and love have vanquished sin!" said the Pope to the faithful gathered this morning in St. Peter's Square to pray the Regina Coeli, the prayer that substitutes the Angelus during Easter time.

The truth of the resurrection, Francis explained, "indelibly marks the life of the Apostles who afterwards felt the need once again to follow their Master and, after receiving the Holy Spirit, went out without fear to announce to all what they had seen with their own eyes and experienced personally".

"In this Jubilee Year, we are called upon to rediscover and welcome with particular intensity the comforting proclamation of the resurrection: 'Christ, my hope, is risen!', he continued. "If Christ is resurrected, we can look with new eyes and heart at every event of our life, even the most negative. Moments of darkness, of failure and sin, can be transformed and announce a new path. When we have reached the lowest depth of misery and weakness, the risen Christ gives us the strength to get up again".

"Mary was the silent witness to the events of the Passion and the resurrection of Jesus. She stood next to the cross; she did not bend when faced with suffering, but instead her faith made her strong. In her mother's heart, broken, the flame of hope always remained alight. ... May the Virgin Mary give us the certainty of faith so that every pained step of our journey, illuminated by the Paschal light, may become a blessing and joy for us and for others, especially for those who suffer as a result of selfishness and indifference".

After the Regina Coeli, the Pope mentioned the execrable attack that took place yesterday in a public park in Lahore, Pakistan, in which more than seventy people lost their lives, mostly children and women of the Christian minority, gathered together for the Easter festivities.

"I wish to express my closeness to those who have been affected by this cowardly and senseless crime, and I invite you to pray to the Lord for the many victims and for their loved ones. I appeal to the civil authorities and all members of society of the nation to make every effort to restore safety and serenity to the population and, in particular, to the most vulnerable religious minorities. I repeat once again that homicidal violence and hatred lead

only to pain and destruction; respect and fraternity are the only way to reach peace. May the Easter of the Lord move us ever more to prayer, and may God stay the hand of the violent, who sow terror and death, and may love, justice and reconciliation reign in the world".
