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## Regina Coeli: collection for Ukraine and appeal for a world without anti-personnel mines

Vatican City, 3 April 2016 – After celebrating Holy Mass, Pope Francis prayed the Regina Coeli with the faithful gathered in St. Peter's Square. Before the Marian prayer, on the day that is "the heart of the Holy Year of Mercy", he recalled all the populations that thirst for reconciliation and peace.

"I think in particular, here in Europe, of the drama of those who suffer the consequences of the violence in Ukraine, of those who remain in lands devastated by hostilities that have already claimed thousands of lives, and of all those, over a million, who have been displaced as a result of the grave ongoing situation there. The affected are primarily the elderly and children. In addition to accompanying them in my constant thought and prayers, I wish to promote humanitarian aid for them. A special collection for this cause will be held in all the Catholic churches throughout Europe on Sunday, April 24. I invite the faithful to participate in this initiative by contributing generously. This gesture of charity, as well as alleviating material suffering, will also express to Ukraine my personal closeness and that of the Church as a whole. I strongly hope that this will promote peace and respect for rights, without further delays, in this sorely-trying land".

"And while we pray for peace", he added, "let us recall that tomorrow will be the United Nations International Day of Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action. Too many people continue to be killed and maimed by these terrible weapons, and brave men and women risk their lives to clear the land of mines. Please, let us renew our commitment to a world without landmines!".