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## **The Pope's words at the Regina Coeli prayer**

### **Before the Regina Coeli**

### **After the Regina Coeli**

At midday today, Fifth Sunday of Easter, the Holy Father Francis appeared at the window of his study in the Vatican Apostolic Palace to pray the *Regina Coeli* with the faithful and pilgrims gathered in St. Peter's Square.

The following is the Pope's introduction to the Marian prayer:

### **Before the Regina Coeli**

Dear brothers and sisters, good morning!

The Word of God, even on this fifth Sunday of Easter, continues to show us the way and the conditions to be the community of the Risen Lord. Last Sunday the relationship between the believer and Jesus the Good Shepherd was emphasized. Today the Gospel proposes to us the moment in which Jesus presents Himself as the true vine and invites us to remain joined with Him to bear much fruit (cf. *Jn* 15: 1-8). The vine is a plant that forms a whole with the branches; and the branches are fruitful only inasmuch as they are united to the vine. This relationship is the secret of the Christian life, and the evangelist John expresses it with the verb "to remain", which in the passage today is repeated seven times. "Remain in me", says the Lord; remain in the Lord.

It is a matter of remaining with the Lord to find the courage to come out of ourselves, our comforts, our restricted and protected spaces, to set forth into the open sea of the needs of others and to give our Christian witness to the world. This courage to come out of oneself and enter into the needs of others arises from faith in the Risen Lord and from the certainty that His Spirit accompanies our history. Indeed, one of the most mature fruits that springs from communion with Christ is the commitment of charity towards one's neighbour, loving brothers with

abnegation of the self, up to the ultimate consequences, as Jesus has loved us. The dynamism of the believer's charity is not the result of strategies, it is not born of external solicitations, or of social or ideological demands, but rather arises from the encounter with Jesus and from remaining in Jesus. He is the vine from which we absorb the sap, that is, "life", so as to bring to society a different way of living and of spending oneself, which puts the last in first place.

When one is intimate with the Lord, just as the vine and the branches are intimate and united, one becomes capable of bearing fruits of new life, of mercy, of justice and of peace, stemming from the Resurrection of the Lord. It is what the Saints did, those who lived the Christian life and witness of charity in fullness in fullness, as they were true branches of the Lord's vine. However, "to be holy does not require being a bishop, a priest or a religious. [...] We are all called to be holy by living our lives with love and by bearing witness in everything we do, wherever we find ourselves" (Apostolic Exhortation *Gaudete et Exsultate*, 14). We are all called to be holy; we must be holy with this richness that we receive from the Risen Lord. Every activity – work, rest, family and social life, the exercise of political, cultural and economic responsibilities — every activity, small or great, if lived in union with Jesus and with an attitude of love and service, is an occasion to live Baptism and evangelical holiness fully.

May Mary, Queen of Saints and model of perfect communion with her divine Son, be of help to us. May she teach us to *abide in Jesus*, like branches to the vine, and never to separate ourselves from His love. Indeed, we can do nothing without Him, because our life is the living Christ, present in the Church and in the world.

### After the Regina Coeli

Dear brothers and sisters,

Yesterday in Krakow, Anna Chrzanowska, lay faithful who dedicated her life to healing the sick in whom she saw the countenance of the suffering Jesus, was proclaimed blessed. Let us thank God for the witness of this apostle of the sick, and endeavour to follow her example.

I accompany with prayer the positive outcome of last Friday's Inter-Korean Summit and the courageous commitment made by the Leaders of the two parties to realize a path of sincere dialogue for a Korean peninsula free of nuclear weapons. I pray the Lord that the hopes for a future of peace and more fraternal friendships may not be disappointed, and that collaboration may continue, bearing fruits of good for the beloved Korean population and for the entire world.

Last week the Christian community of Nigeria was again shaken by the killing of a group of faithful including two priests: let us entrust these brothers to the God of mercy so that He may help those communities, which are so sorely tried, to find harmony and peace.

I greet with affection the pilgrims present here today, truly too many to name each group! But at least I will greet those from Braga, Portugal, from India and Pakistan, the faithful of Pavia, Crema and Vignale, the many young people who have received Confirmation, and teenagers from Cuneo, Remedello, Arcore, Valle Olona, Modica and Isnello.

A special thought for the Confraternities of Assisi, accompanied by their bishop; for the young animators of the Congregation of the Josephine Fathers of Murialdo; and for the participants in the *National Convention of the Catechumenate*, promoted by the Italian Episcopal Conference.

Dear brothers and sisters, the day after tomorrow, 1 May, in the afternoon, the Marian Month will begin with a pilgrimage to the Shrine of Our Lady of Divine Love. We will recite the Rosary, praying in particular for peace in Syria and in the entire world. I invite you to join spiritually and to continue to pray the Rosary for peace for all the

month of May.

I wish you all a good Sunday. And please, do not forget to pray for me. Have a good lunch, and goodbye.

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