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The Pope's words at the Regina Caeli prayer

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

The following are the Pope's words of introduction to the Marian prayer:

Before the *Regina Caeli*

Dear brothers and sisters, *buongiorno!*

On this third Sunday of Easter, the Gospel narrates the encounter of the Risen Jesus with the disciples of Emmaus (cf. *Lk 24: 13-35*). These are two disciples who, resigned to the death of the Master, decide on the day of Passover to leave Jerusalem and to return home. Perhaps they were a little uneasy because they had heard the women coming from the sepulchre and saying that the Lord was like that... they go away. And while they are walking, sadly talking about what has happened, Jesus appears beside them, but they do not recognize him. He asks them why they are so sad, and they say to him: "But, are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?" (v. 18). And Jesus replies: "What things?" (v. 19). And they tell him the entire story, and Jesus makes them tell him the story. Then, while they are walking, he helps them reinterpret the facts in a different way, in the light of the prophecies, of the Word of God, of all that had been proclaimed to the people of Israel. To reread: that is what Jesus does with them, helping to reread. Let us dwell on this aspect.

Indeed, for us to it is important to reread our history together with Jesus: the story of our life, of a certain period, of our days, with its disappointments and hopes. Besides, we too, like those disciples, faced with what happens to us, can find ourselves lost in the face of these events, alone and uncertain, with many questions and worries, disappointments, many things. Today's Gospel invites us to tell Jesus everything, sincerely, without being afraid of disturbing him: he listens; without fear of saying the wrong thing, without shame at our struggle to understand. The Lord is happy whenever we open ourselves to him; only in this way can he take us by the hand, accompany

us and make our hearts burn again (cf. v. 32). We too, then, like the disciples of Emmaus, are called to spend time with him so that, when evening comes, he will remain with us (cf. v. 29).

There is a good way of doing this, and today I would like to propose it to you: it consists of dedicating some time, every evening, to a brief *examination of conscience*. But, what happened today within me? That is the question. It is a matter of *rereading the day with Jesus*, rereading my day: opening the heart to him, bringing to him people, choices, fears, falls and hopes, all the things that happened; to learn gradually to look at things with different eyes, with his eyes and not just our own. We can thus relive the experience of those two disciples. Before Christ's love, even that which seems wearisome and unsuccessful can appear under another light: a difficult cross to embrace, the decision to forgive an offence, a missed opportunity for redress, the toil of work, the sincerity that comes at a price, and the trials of family life can appear to us in a new light, the light of the Crucified and Risen, who knows how to turn every fall into a step forward. But to do this, it is important to *drop our defences*: to leave time and space for Jesus, not to hide anything from him, to bring him our miseries, to let ourselves be wounded by his truth, to let our heart vibrate at the breath of his Word.

We can begin today, to dedicate this evening a moment of prayer during which we ask ourselves: how was my day? What were its joys, what were its sorrows, what were its mundanities, what happened? What were the pearls of the day, possibly hidden, to be thankful for? Was there a little love in what I did? And what are the falls, the sadness, the doubts and fears to bring to Jesus so that He can open new ways to me, to lift me up and encourage me? May Mary, wise Virgin, help us to recognize Jesus who walks with us and to reread- the word: *re-read* – every day of our life in front of him.

After the Regina Caeli

Dear brothers and sisters!

Yesterday, in Paris, Henri Planchat, priest of the Congregation of Saint Vincent de Paul, Ladislav Radigue and three companion priests of the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary were beatified. Pastors inspired by apostolic zeal, they were united in their witness to the faith to the point of martyrdom, which they suffered in Paris in 1871, during the so-called Paris "Commune". A round of applause for the new Blessed!

Yesterday was Earth Day. I hope that commitment to care for creation may always be united with effective solidarity with the poorest.

Unfortunately, the situation in Sudan remains grave, and therefore I renew my appeal for an end to the violence as soon as possible and for a return to the path of dialogue. I invite everyone to pray for our Sudanese brothers and sisters.

Today is the 99th Day of the Catholic University of the Sacred Heart, on the theme *For the love of knowledge. The challenges of the new humanism*. I hope that that largest Italian Catholic university will face these challenges with the spirit of the founders, in particular the young Armida Barelli, proclaimed Blessed a year ago.

Next Friday I will go to Budapest, in Hungary, for three days, to complete the trip I made in 2021 for the International Eucharistic Congress. It will be an opportunity to embrace once again a Church and a people so dear to me. It will also be a journey to the centre of Europe, over which the icy winds of war continue to blow, while the displacement of so many people puts urgent humanitarian questions on the agenda. But now I wish to address you with affection, dear Hungarian brothers and sisters, as I look forward to visiting you as a pilgrim, friend and brother of all, and to meet, among others, the authorities, the bishops, the priests and consecrated persons, the young, the university community and the poor. I know you are making great efforts to prepare for my arrival: I thank you from my heart for this. And I ask you all to accompany me on this journey with your prayers.

And let us not forget our Ukrainian brothers and sisters, still afflicted by this war.

I greet you all from my heart, Romans and pilgrims from Italy and many countries – I see the flags of so many countries – in particular those of Salamanca and the students of Albacete, as well as the Veneto-Trentino grouping of the Order of Malta Relief Corps.

I greet the faithful of Ferrara, Palermo and Grumello del Monte; the community of the Diocesan School of Lodi; the young people of various towns in the dioceses of Alba, Bergamo, Brescia, Como and Milan; the candidates for Confirmation from many Italian parishes; the pupils of the Sacred Heart Institute of Cadoneghe; the “Volontieri” cooperative from Casoli and the “Mototurismo” group from Agna.

I wish you all a good Sunday; and please do not forget to pray for me. Enjoy your meal, and *arrivederci!*
