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The Pope's words at the Regina Caeli prayer

At midday today, second Sunday of Easter or Divine Mercy Sunday, 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 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, happy Sunday!

Today, the second Sunday of Easter, dedicated by Saint John Paul II to Divine Mercy, the Gospel (cf. *Jn* 20:19-30) tells us that, by believing in Jesus, Son of God, we can *have eternal life* in His name (v. 31). "To have life": what does it mean?

We all want to *have life*, but there are various ways of having it. For example, there are those who reduce existence to a frenetic race to enjoy and possess many things: to eat and drink, to enjoy themselves, to accumulate money and objects, to feel strong and new emotions, and so on. It is a road that at first sight seems pleasurable, but which does not satiate the heart. It is not in this way that one "has life", because by following the path of pleasure and power one does not find happiness. Indeed, many aspects of existence remain unanswered, such as love, the inevitable experiences of pain, of limitations and of death. And then the dream we all have in common remains unfulfilled: the hope of living forever, of being loved without limit. Today the Gospel says that this fullness of life, to which every one of us is called, is realized in Jesus: it is He who gives us this fullness of life. But how can one gain access to it, how can one experience it?

Let us look at what happened to the disciples in the Gospel. They are going through the most tragic moment in life: after the days of the passion they shut themselves away in the Upper Room, afraid and discouraged. The Risen One comes to them and shows them His wounds (cf. v. 20): they were the signs of suffering and pain,

they could stir feelings of guilt, yet with Jesus they become channels of mercy and forgiveness. In this way, the disciples see and touch with their hands the fact that with Jesus, life always wins, death and sin are defeated, with Jesus. And they receive the gift of His Spirit, which gives them a new life, as beloved sons – life as beloved sons – imbued with joy, love and hope. I will ask one thing: do you have hope? Each one of you, ask yourselves: “How is my hope?”

This is how to “have life” every day: it is enough to fix one’s eyes on the crucified and risen Jesus, encountering Him in the Sacraments and in prayer, recognizing that He is present, believing in Him, letting oneself be touched by His grace and guided by His example, experiencing the joy of loving like Him. Every encounter with Jesus, a living encounter with Jesus enables us to have more life. Looking for Jesus, letting ourselves be found – because He looks for us – opening our heart to the encounter with Jesus.

Let us ask ourselves, though: do I believe in the power of the resurrection of Jesus, do I believe that Jesus is risen? Do I believe in His victory over sin, fear and death? Do I let myself be drawn into a relationship with the Lord, with Jesus? And do I let myself be prompted by Him to love my brothers and sisters, and to hope every day? Each one of you, think about this.

May Mary help us to have ever greater faith in Jesus, in the risen Jesus, to “have life” and to spread the joy of Easter.

After the Regina Caeli

Dear brothers and sisters!

I would like to remember the people who died in the bus crash in South Africa a few days ago. Let us pray for them and for their families.

Yesterday was International Day of Sport for Development and Peace. We all know how practising a sport can educate in an open, solidarity-based, unprejudiced sociality. But for this we need leaders and trainers who aim not only at winning or making money.

Let us not cease to pray for peace, a just and lasting peace, especially for tormented Ukraine and for Palestine and Israel. May the Spirit of the Risen Lord enlighten and sustain all those who work to decrease the tension and encourage gestures that make negotiations possible. May the Lord give leaders the capacity to pause a little in order to deliberate, to negotiate.

I greet all of you, Romans and pilgrims from Italy and from many countries. In particular, I greet the students of the *Mar Qardakh* Catholic School in Erbil, capital of Iraqi Kurdistan; and the young people of Castellón, Spain. I affectionately welcome the prayer groups who cultivate the spirituality of Divine Mercy, gathered today at the Shrine of the Holy Spirit in Sassia.

I greet “La Perosina” bowling club, the ACLI group from Chieti, participants in the International Conference for the abolition of surrogacy, the faithful of Modugno and Alcamo, students of the “San Giuseppe” School of Bassano del Grappa and candidates for confirmation from Santarcangelo di Romagna. I greet the many Polish people here: I can see the flags!

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