



(ZENIT, Vatican City, May 8, 2016)

Here is a ZENIT translation of the address Pope Francis gave before and after praying the midday Regina Caeli with those gathered in St. Peter's Square.

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Dear brothers and sisters, good morning.

Today in Italy and in other parts of the world, there is the celebration of the Ascension of Jesus to heaven, which occurred 40 days after Easter. We contemplate the mystery of Jesus who leaves our earthly space to enter into the plenitude of the glory of God, taking with him our humanity. Our humanity enters for the first time into heaven. The Gospel of Luke shows us the reaction of the disciples before the Lord who “parted from them and was taken up to heaven.”

There was in them neither sorrow nor confusion, but rather they “did him homage and then returned to Jerusalem with great joy.”

This is the return of those who are no longer afraid of the city that had rejected the Teacher, that had witnessed the betrayal of Judas and of Peter who denied him, the scattering of the disciples, and the violence of a power that felt threatened.

From that day, for the apostles and for every disciple of Christ, it was possible to live in Jerusalem and in all the cities of the world, even those most marked by injustice and violence, because above every city is the same heaven, and every resident can raise his eyes with hope.

God is true man and his human body is in heaven, and this is our hope, it is our anchor that is there [in heaven] and we are firmly in this hope if we look

toward heaven. In this heaven dwells that God who has revealed himself to be so close that he took a human face, that of Jesus of Nazareth.

He remains forever; he is God-with-us.

Let us remember this, Emmanuel, God-with-us! And he doesn't leave us alone. We can look beyond to remember the future that lies before us. In the Ascension of Jesus, the Risen Crucified One, is the promise of our participation in the plentitude of life, together with God.

Before departing from his friends, Jesus referred to the event of his death and resurrection saying, "You are witnesses of these things." That is, the disciples, the apostles are witnesses of the death and the resurrection of Christ and this day, also of the Ascension of Christ.

And in fact, after having seen their Lord ascend to heaven, the disciples returned to the city as witnesses who with joy announced to everyone the new life that comes from the Risen Crucified One, in whose name "repentance, for the forgiveness of sins, would be preached in his name to all the nations."

This is the testimony — made not only with words but also with daily life — that every Sunday should leave our churches to go during the week into houses, offices, schools, places of meeting and entertainment, into hospitals, prisons, retirement homes, the places packed with immigrants, the peripheries of cities.

This is the testimony we have to take every week: "Christ is with us. Jesus ascended to heaven, he is with us. Christ is alive."

Jesus has assured us that in this proclamation and in this testimony we will be "clothed with power from on high," that is with the power of the Holy Spirit. There is the secret of this mission: the real presence among us of the risen Lord, who with the gift of the Spirit continues opening our minds and our hearts, so that we proclaim his love and his mercy too, in the most hostile environments of our cities.

The Holy Spirit is the true artisan of the multiform testimony that the Church and every baptized person gives to the world.

Therefore we can never fail to retreat in prayer to praise God and invoke the gift of the Spirit. In this week that brings us to the feast of Pentecost, let us stay spiritually in the Upper Room, together with the Virgin Mary, to receive

the Holy Spirit. We do this now also in communion with the faithful who have gathered in the Sanctuary of Pompeii for the traditional prayer.

[Regina Caeli]

Dear brothers and sisters, today is the 50th World Day of Communication, established by the Second Vatican Council. In fact, the council fathers, reflecting on the Church in the modern world, understood the crucial importance of communication, that can “build bridges between individuals and within families, social groups and peoples. This is possible both in the material world and the digital world.”

I offer everyone in the field of communication a warm greeting, and I hope that our way of communicating in the Church always has a clear evangelical style, a style that unites the truth with mercy.

I greet all of you, faithful of Rome and the pilgrims from Italy and various countries, in particular the Polish faithful from Warsaw, Lowicz and Ostroda; the Philharmonic of Vienna; the Irish group, the Friends of Monsignor O’Flaherty; the students from the Corderius school (from the Low Country); and the Katholische Akademische Verbindung ‘Capitolina.’

I greet the participants in the March for Life, the friends of the Obra Don Folci, the minor seminary of Pius X, and the Scouts of Europe of West Rome and South Rome, and the numerous confirmands of the Diocese of Genoa. The Genoese are loud!

Today in many countries, Mother’s Day is celebrated. We recall with gratitude and affection all mothers, those who are today in the Square, our mothers, those who are among us and those who have gone to heaven. We entrust them to Mary, the mother of Jesus, and for all of them we pray a Hail Mary.

[Hail Mary]

I wish you all a good Sunday and please, don’t forget to pray for me. Have a good lunch and arrivederci!

[Translation by ZENIT]