



The Holy See

POPE FRANCIS

REGINA CAELI

Saint Peter's Square
Easter Monday, 2 April 2018

[Multimedia]

Dear Brothers and Sisters, Good morning!

The Monday after Easter is called “Monday of the Angel”, according to a very beautiful tradition which corresponds to Bible sources on the Resurrection. The Gospels (cf. Mt 28:1-10, Mk 16:1-7; Lk 24:1-12), in fact, recount that when the women went to the Sepulchre, they found it open. They feared they would not be able to enter because the tomb had been sealed with a large rock. Instead, it was open, and a voice from within told them that Jesus was not there but had Risen.

The words: “*he has Risen*” are uttered for the first time. The Evangelists tell us that this first announcement was made by *angels*, that is, by God’s messengers. There is a significance in this angelic presence: just as the Angel Gabriel announced the Incarnation of the Word, so too a human word was not adequate to announce the Resurrection for the first time. A higher being was needed to communicate a reality that was so awe-inspiring, so incredible that perhaps no human being would have dared to utter it. After this first announcement, the community of disciples begins to repeat: “The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!” (Lk 24:34). This is a beautiful announcement. We can all say it together now: “The Lord has risen indeed”. This first announcement — “The Lord has risen indeed!” — required an intelligence that was superior to that of human beings.

Today is a festive and joyful day customarily spent with family. It is a family day. After celebrating Easter, one feels the need to gather again with one’s loved ones and with friends to celebrate, because *fraternity* is the fruit of the Easter of Christ who, with his death and Resurrection,

conquered sin which separated man from God, man from himself, man from his brothers. But we know that sin always separates, always creates hostility. Jesus broke down the wall that divides people and restored peace, beginning to weave the fabric of a new fraternity. It is so important in our time to rediscover brotherhood as it was experienced by the early Christian communities; to rediscover how to make room for Jesus who never divides and always unites. There cannot be true communion and commitment to the common good and social justice without fraternity and sharing. Without fraternal sharing, no ecclesial or civil community can be formed: there is only an ensemble of individuals moved or grouped together, according to common interests. But brotherhood is a grace that Jesus creates.

The Easter of Christ has caused another thing to erupt into the world: *the novelty of dialogue and relationship*, a novelty which has become a responsibility for Christians. Jesus in fact said: "By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (Jn 13:35). This is why we cannot close ourselves off in our private world, within our group, but instead we are called to safeguard the common good and to take care of our brothers and sisters, in particular those who are weakest and most marginalized. Only fraternity can guarantee a lasting peace, can overcome poverty, can extinguish tension and war, can eradicate corruption and crime. May the Angel who tells us: "He has risen" help us to live the fraternity and the novelty of dialogue and relationships and of concern for the common good.

May the Virgin Mary whom, in this time of Easter, we invoke with the title *Queen of Heaven*, support us with her prayers so that the fraternity and communion that we experience in these days of Easter may become our way of life and the spirit of our relationships.

After the Regina Caeli, the Holy Father continued:

Dear brothers and sisters, in the Easter climate which distinguishes this day, I cordially greet all of you, families, parish groups, associations and pilgrims from Italy and from various parts of the world.

I hope that each of you will spend with serenity these days of the Octave of Easter, which extends the joy of the Resurrection of Christ. May you take this opportunity to be witnesses to the Risen Lord's peace, especially with regard to the most fragile and the most underprivileged. On this matter I would like to assure you of my prayers for *World Autism Awareness Day* which is being observed today, 2 April.

Let us invoke the gift of peace for the entire world, especially for people who are suffering most due to ongoing hostilities. In particular I renew my appeal that people who have been kidnapped or unjustly deprived of their freedom may be released and allowed to return to their homes.

Happy Monday of the Angel! Please do not forget to pray for me.

Enjoy your lunch. *Arrivederci* and: “The Lord has risen indeed”.