



The Holy See

POPE FRANCIS

REGINA CAELI

*Saint Peter's Square
Sunday, 22 April 2018*

[Multimedia]

Dear Brothers and Sisters, Good morning!

The Liturgy of this Fourth Sunday of Easter pursues the aim of helping us rediscover our identity as *disciples of the Risen Lord*. In the Acts of the Apostles, Peter openly declares that the healing of the cripple, which he carried out and which all of Jerusalem speaks about, took place in the name of Jesus, because “there is salvation in no one else” (4:12). There in that healed man is each one of us — that man is the shape of ourselves: we are all there within — there are our communities: each of us can be healed of the many forms of spiritual infirmity that we have — ambition, laziness, pride — if we agree, with confidence, to put our very existence into the hands of the Risen Lord. “By the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth”, affirms Peter, “this man is standing before you well” (v. 10). But who is the Christ who heals? What does being healed by him consist in? What are we healed of? And by means of what attitudes?

The answer to all these questions can be found in today’s Gospel, where Jesus says: “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep” (Jn 10:11). This self-introduction by Jesus cannot be reduced to an emotional suggestion, without any concrete effect! Jesus heals through his being a shepherd who lays down his life. Giving his life for us, Jesus says to each one: ‘Your life is worth so much to me, that to save it I give all of myself’. It is precisely this *offering of his life* that makes him the *Good Shepherd par excellence*, the One who heals, the One who allows us to live a beautiful and fruitful life.

The second part of the same Gospel passage tells us how Jesus can heal us and make our life

joyful and fruitful: “I am the good shepherd”, Jesus says. “I know my own and my own know me, as the Father knows me and I know the Father” (vv. 14-15). Jesus does not speak of intellectual knowledge, no, but of a personal relationship, of predilection, of mutual tenderness, reflection of the same intimate loving relationship between him and the Father. This is the attitude through which a living relationship with Jesus is realized: *allowing ourselves to be known* by him. Not closing up within ourselves; but opening ourselves to the Lord, so that he may know us. He is attentive to each one of us; he knows the depths of our heart: he knows our merits and our defects, the projects we have carried out and the hopes that have gone unfulfilled. But he accepts us as we are, even with our sins, so as to heal us, to forgive us; he guides us with love, so that we can cross even impervious paths without losing the way. He accompanies us.

In turn, we are called *to know Jesus*. This implies an encounter with him, an encounter which spurs the desire to follow him, abandoning self-referential attitudes and setting out on new paths, indicated by Christ himself and open to vast horizons. When in our communities the desire to live the relationship with Jesus, to listen to his voice and to follow him faithfully cools down, it is inevitable that other ways of thinking and living that are not consistent with the Gospel will prevail. May Mary, our Mother, help us to develop an ever stronger relationship with Jesus. Opening ourselves to Jesus, so that he may enter within us. A stronger relationship: He is Risen. In this way, we can follow him all our life. On this World Day of Prayer for Vocations, may Mary intercede so that many may respond with generosity and perseverance to the Lord who calls us to leave everything for His Kingdom.

Following the recitation of the Regina Caeli, the Pope added:

Dear brothers and sisters, I am concerned about what is happening these days in Nicaragua, where, following a social protest, clashes have taken place which have also claimed some victims. I express my closeness to that country in prayer, and I join the Bishops in asking that all violence cease, that useless bloodshed be avoided, and that open questions be resolved peaceably and with a sense of responsibility.

As I mentioned earlier, on this Fourth Sunday of Easter the whole Church celebrates the Day of Prayer for Vocations. The theme is: “Listening, discerning, living the call of the Lord”. *Let us thank* the Lord because he continues to inspire in the Church stories of love for Jesus Christ, in praise of his glory and in service to his brothers and sisters. Today, in particular, let us give thanks for the new priests whom I ordained a short while ago in Saint Peter’s Basilica. And *let us ask* the Lord to send many good labourers to work in his field, as well as to multiply vocations to consecrated life and to Christian marriage. As I said, I have ordained 16 priests today. Of these 16, four have come here to greet you and bestow the blessing with me. *[Four newly ordained priests take their places beside the Pope at the window].*

I cordially greet all of you, Romans and pilgrims from Italy and from many countries, especially those from Setúbal, Lisbon and Krakow, and the Sister Disciples of the Divine Master who have come from Korea.

I greet the pilgrims of Castiglione d'Adda, Torralba, Modica, Cremona and Brescia. The parish choir of Ugovizza; the young confirmands from Gazzaniga, Pollenza and Cisano sul Neva.

I wish you all a happy Sunday and please do not forget to pray for me. Enjoy your lunch.

Arrivederci!