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The Pope's words at the Regina Caeli prayer

At midday today, Sunday of Pentecost, 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 Holy Father's words of introduction to the Eastertime Marian prayer:

Before the Regina Caeli

Dear brothers and sisters, *buongiorno*, happy Sunday!

And today, happy feast day too, because today we celebrate the Solemnity of Pentecost. We celebrate the effusion of the Holy Spirit on the Apostles, which took place fifty days after Easter. Jesus had promised it several times. In today's Liturgy, the Gospel recounts one of these promises, when Jesus said to the disciples: "He will *teach* you all things, and *bring to your remembrance* all that I have said to you" (Jn 14: 26). This is what the Spirit does: he *teaches* and *reminds* us of what Christ said. Let us reflect on these two actions, *to teach* and *to remind*, because it is in this way the he makes the Gospel of Jesus enter into our hearts.

First of all, the Holy Spirit *teaches*. In this way he helps us to overcome an obstacle that presents itself to us in the experience of faith: that of *distance*. He teaches us to overcome the obstacle of distance in the experience of faith. Indeed, the doubt may arise that between the Gospel and everyday life there is a great distance: Jesus lived two thousand years ago, they were other times, other situations, and therefore the Gospel seems to be outdated, it seems unable to speak to our current moment, with its demands and its problems. The question also comes to us: what does the Gospel have to say in the age of the internet, in the age of globalization? What impact can its word have?

We can say that the Holy Spirit is a specialist in bridging distances, he knows how to bridge distances; he teaches us how to overcome them. It is he who connects the teaching of Jesus with every time and every person. With him Christ's words are not a memory, no: Christ's words, by virtue of the Holy Spirit, come alive

today! The Spirit makes them alive for us: through Scripture he speaks to us and directs us in the present. The Holy Spirit does not fear the passing of the centuries; rather, He makes believers attentive to the problems and events of their time. Indeed, for when the Holy Spirit teaches, he actualizes: he keeps faith ever young. We risk making faith a museum piece: it is a risk! He, on the other hand, brings it up to date, always up to date, the faith up to date: this is his job. For the Holy Spirit does not bind himself to passing epochs or fashions, but brings into today the relevance of Jesus, risen and living.

And how does the Spirit do this? By making us *remember*. Here is the second verb, to *remind*, *ri-cordare*. What does remind mean? To remind means to restore to the heart, *ri-cordare*: the Spirit restores the Gospel to our heart. It happens as it did for the Apostles: they had listened to Jesus many times, yet they had understood little. The same thing happens to us. But from Pentecost forth, with the Holy Spirit, they remember and they understand. They welcome his words as made specially for them, and they pass from an outward knowledge, an awareness of memory, to a living relationship, a convinced, joyful relationship with the Lord. It is the Spirit who does this, who moves from “hearsay” to personal knowledge of Jesus, who enters the heart. Thus, the Spirit changes our lives: he makes Jesus’ thoughts become our thoughts. And he does this by reminding us of his words, bringing Jesus’ words to our heart, today.

Brothers and sisters, without the Spirit reminding us of Jesus, faith becomes forgetful. Very often, faith becomes a recollection without memory; instead, memory is living and living memory is brought by the Spirit. And we – let us try to ask ourselves – are we forgetful Christians? Maybe all it takes is a setback, a struggle, a crisis to forget Jesus’ love and fall into doubt and fear? Woe to us, should we become forgetful Christians! The remedy is to invoke the Holy Spirit. Let us do this often, especially in important moments, before difficult decisions and in difficult situations. Let us take the Gospel in our hands and invoke the Spirit. We can say, “Come, Holy Spirit, remind me of Jesus, enlighten my heart”. This is a beautiful prayer: “Come, Holy Spirit, remind me of Jesus, enlighten my heart”. Shall we say it together? “Come, Holy Spirit, remind me of Jesus, enlighten my heart”. Then, let us open the Gospel and read a small passage slowly. And the Spirit will make it speak to our lives.

May the Virgin Mary, filled with of the Holy Spirit, kindle in us the desire to pray to him and receive the Word of God.

After the Regina Caeli

Dear brothers and sisters,

On Pentecost, God’s dream for humanity becomes reality; fifty days after Easter, peoples who speak different languages encounter and understand one another. But now, one hundred days after the beginning of the armed aggression against Ukraine, the nightmare of war, which is the negation of God’s dream, has once again befallen humanity: peoples in conflict with one another, peoples who kill each other, people being driven from their homes instead of being brought closer. And while the fury of destruction and death rampages and the conflicts rage on, fuelling an escalation that is increasingly dangerous for all, I renew my appeal to the leaders of Nations: do not lead humanity into ruin, please! Do not lead humanity into ruin, please! Let true negotiations take place, real talks for a ceasefire and for a sustainable solution. Let the desperate cry of the suffering people be heard – we see this every day in the media – have respect for human life and stop the macabre destruction of cities and villages in the east of Ukraine. Let us continue, please, to pray and to strive tirelessly for peace.

Yesterday in Beirut, two Friars Minor Capuchin were beatified: Leonardo Melki and Thomas George Saleh, priests and martyrs, killed in hatred of the faith in Turkey in 1915 and 1917 respectively. These two Lebanese missionaries, in a hostile context, proved their unshakeable faith in God and self-sacrifice for their neighbour. May their example strengthen our Christian witness. They were young – they were not even 35 years old. A round of applause for the new Blessed!

I have learned with satisfaction that the truce in Yemen has been renewed for another two months. Thanks to

God, and to you. I hope that this sign of hope may be a further step to put an end to that bloody conflict, which has caused one of the worst humanitarian crises of our times. Please, do not forget to spare a thought for the children of Yemen: hunger, destruction, lack of education, lack of everything. Let us think of the children!

I would like to assure you of my prayers for the victims of the landslides caused by torrential rains in the metropolitan region of Recife, Brazil.

I greet all of you, Romans and pilgrims! I greet the "Advocacy in Mission" Association; the members of the International Reconciliation Movement and the Nonviolent Movement; the French "Saint Louis" scout group, the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul and the *Evangelii Gaudium* fraternity. I greet the faithful of Piacenza d'Adige, the Choir of Castelfidardo, the young people of Pollone and those of Cassina de' Pecchi - I remember when I visited these places many years ago -, the pilgrims from the Antoniani Sanctuaries of Camposampiero and the cyclists of Sarcedo, and I also greet the young people of the *Immacolata*.

I express my closeness to fishermen: let us think of fishermen who, due to the increase in the cost of petrol, risk having to stop working, and I extend this to all the categories of worker gravely afflicted by the consequences of the conflict in Ukraine.

I pray for you; pray for me. I wish you all a blessed Sunday. Enjoy your meal, and *arrivederci*!
