



The Holy See

POPE FRANCIS

REGINA CAELI

Saint Peter's Square
Sunday, 13 May 2018

Multimedia

Dear Brothers and Sisters, Good morning!

Today, in Italy and in many other countries, the Solemnity of the Ascension of the Lord is being celebrated. This Solemnity embraces two elements. On the one hand it directs our gaze *toward heaven*, where the glorified Jesus is seated at the right hand of God (cf. Mk 16:19). On the other, it reminds us of the *mission of the Church*: why? Because Jesus, Risen and Ascended into heaven, sends his disciples to spread the Gospel throughout the world. Therefore, the Ascension exhorts us to lift our gaze toward heaven, in order to return it immediately to the earth, to implement the tasks that the Risen Lord entrusts to us.

It is what we are invited to do in the day's Gospel passage, in which the event of the Ascension occurs immediately after the mission that Jesus entrusts to the disciples. It is a boundless mission — that is, literally without boundaries — which surpasses human strength. Jesus says, in fact: “Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to the whole creation” (Mk 16:15). The task which Jesus entrusts to a small group of common men lacking great intellectual capacity seems truly too bold! Yet this small company, insignificant compared to the great powers of the world, is sent to bring the message of Jesus' love and mercy to every corner of the earth.

But this plan of God can be accomplished only with the strength that God himself grants to the Apostles. In this sense, Jesus assures them that their mission will be supported by the Holy Spirit. And he says this: “you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth” (Acts

1:8). This is how this mission was able to be accomplished, and the Apostles began this work which was then continued by their successors. The mission that Jesus entrusted to the Apostles has continued through the centuries, and continues still today: it requires the cooperation of all of us. Each one, in fact, by the power of the Baptism that he or she received, is qualified in turn to proclaim the Gospel. Baptism is precisely what qualifies us and also spurs us to be missionaries, to proclaim the Gospel.

The Lord's Ascension into heaven, while inaugurating a new form of Jesus' presence among us, calls us to keep eyes and hearts open to encounter him, to serve him and bear witness to him to others. It is a matter of being men and women of the Ascension, that is, those who seek Christ along the paths of our time, bringing his word of salvation to the ends of the earth. On this journey we encounter Christ himself in our brothers and sisters, especially in the poorest, in those who suffer in their very flesh the harsh and humiliating experience of old and new forms of poverty. As at the beginning the Risen Christ sent his Apostles with the power of the Holy Spirit, so too does he send all of us today, with the same power, so as to establish concrete and visible signs of hope. Because Jesus gives us hope. He went to heaven and opened the gates of heaven and the hope that we will reach it.

May the Virgin Mary who, as Mother of the dead and Risen Lord, enlivened the faith of the first community of disciples, help us too to "lift up our hearts", as the Liturgy exhorts us to do. And at the same time may she help us to keep our "feet on the ground", and to bravely sow the Gospel in the practical situations of life and of history.

After praying the Regina Caeli, Pope Francis added the following remarks:

Dear brothers and sisters, I am particularly close to the dear people of Indonesia, in a special way to the Christian communities of the city of Surabaya which was harshly struck by the grave attack on places of worship. I raise my prayers for all the victims and their relatives. Together let us invoke the God of peace to put an end to these acts of violence, and so that feelings not of hatred and violence but of reconciliation and fraternity may find a place in everyone's heart. Let us pray in silence.

Today is the World Day of Social Communications, with the theme "Fake news and journalism for peace". I greet all media workers, in particular journalists who strive to find the truth in news, contributing to a just and peaceful society.

I greet all of you, people of Rome and pilgrims; in particular the musicians and folklore groups from Germany; the faithful of Paraguay, members of the *Virgen de Caacupé* community residing in Rome; participants in the uciim Conference, 50 years after the death of their Founder Gesualdo Nosengo; the *Dives in Misericordia* movement of Naples.

I greet the faithful from Catania, Scandicci, San Ferdinando di Puglia and San Marzano sul Sarno; the many young confirmands and confirmed from Genoa, as well as those from Emmenbrücke, Switzerland, and Liscate; the children from the Parish of San Giustino in Rome; and the students of the *Tommaso Aversa* Institute of Mistretta.

I greet the employees of Federal Express Europe, with the hope that the current difficulties may find a positive solution.

I address a special thought to the Italian Alpine troops gathered in Trento for the National Assembly. I encourage them to be witnesses to charity and workers for peace, following the example of Alpine soldier Teresio Olivelli, defender of the weak, recently proclaimed Blessed. And as today is the day dedicated to mothers in many countries, a round of applause for mothers! I would like to greet all the mothers, thanking them for their care of the family. I also recall the mothers who are watching us from heaven and continue to keep us in their prayers.

Let us pray to our heavenly Mother, who today, 13 May, with the name of Our Lady of Fatima, helps us to continue the journey.

And I wish everyone a happy Sunday. Please, do not forget to pray for me. Enjoy your lunch!
Arrivederci!