



The Holy See

POPE FRANCIS

REGINA CAELI

Saint Peter's Square

Sunday, 31 May 2020 [\[Multimedia\]](#)

Dear Brothers and Sisters, Good morning,

Today that the Square is open, we are able to return. It is a pleasure!

Today we celebrate the great [feast of Pentecost](#), in memory of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the first Christian community. Today's Gospel (cf. *Jn* 20:19-23) takes us back to the evening of Easter and shows us the Risen Jesus who appears in the Upper Room, where the disciples have taken refuge. They were afraid. He "stood among them and said to them, 'Peace be with you!'" (v. 19). These first words pronounced by the Risen One — "Peace be with you" — are to be considered as more than a greeting: they express forgiveness, the forgiveness granted to the disciples who, to tell the truth, had abandoned him. They are words of reconciliation and forgiveness. And when we wish peace to others, we too are granting forgiveness, and asking for forgiveness as well. Jesus offers his peace precisely to these disciples who are afraid, who find it hard to believe what they have seen, that is, the empty tomb, and they underestimate the witness of Mary of Magdala and of the other women. Jesus forgives; he always forgives, and offers his peace to his friends. Do not forget: Jesus never tires of forgiving. It is we who tire of asking for forgiveness.

By forgiving and gathering his disciples around him, Jesus makes them a Church, *his* Church, which is a community reconciled and ready for mission. Reconciled and ready for mission. When a community is not reconciled, it is not ready for mission: it is ready for discussions within it; it is ready for internal [discussions]. The encounter with the Risen Lord upends the lives of the Apostles and transforms them into courageous witnesses. Indeed, immediately afterwards he says, "As the Father has sent me, even so I send you" (v. 21). These words help us understand that the Apostles are sent to continue the same mission that the Father entrusted to Jesus. "I send

you”: it is not time to stay locked up, nor to regret: to regret the ‘good times’, those times spent with the Master. The joy of the Resurrection is great, but it is an expansive joy, which should not be kept to oneself: it is to be given. On the Sundays of the Easter Season we first heard this same episode, then the encounter with the disciples of Emmaus, then the Good Shepherd, the farewell discourses and the promise of the Holy Spirit: all this is directed toward strengthening the disciples’ faith — and ours as well — in view of the mission.

And precisely to inspire mission, Jesus gives his Spirit to the Apostles. The Gospel states: “he breathed on them, and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit’” (v. 22). The Holy Spirit is fire that burns away sins and creates new men and women; he is the fire of love with which the disciples can ‘set the world on fire’, that tender love that favours the little ones, the poor, the excluded... In the sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation we received the Holy Spirit with his gifts: wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and fear of God. This last gift — fear of God — is the very opposite of the fear that first paralyzed the disciples: it is love for the Lord; it is the certainty of his mercy and his goodness; it is the confidence that we are able to move in the direction he indicates, without ever lacking his presence and support.

The feast of Pentecost renews the awareness that the life-giving presence of the Holy Spirit abides in us. He also gives us the courage to go outside the protective walls of our “Upper Rooms”, of our little groups, without easing into a quiet life or withdrawing into sterile habits. Let us now raise our thoughts to Mary: when the Holy Spirit came, she was there, with the Apostles, a protagonist with the first Community that experienced the wonders of Pentecost, and let us pray that she obtain for the Church the ardent missionary spirit.

After the Regina Caeli, the Holy Father continued:

Dear brothers and sisters,

seven months ago, the [Synod for the Amazon](#) concluded. Today, the [feast of Pentecost](#), let us invoke the Holy Spirit so that he might give light and strength to the Church and to society in the Amazon region, sorely tried by the pandemic. Many have been infected and have died, including members of the indigenous peoples, who are particularly vulnerable. Through the intercession of Mary, Mother of the Amazon, I pray for the poorest and the most defenseless in that precious Region, but also for others throughout the world, and I plead that no one should lack health care. Take care of people, not save for the economy. Take care of people, who are more important than the economy. We people are temples of the Holy Spirit; the economy is not.

Today is the National Day of Relief in Italy, to promote solidarity towards the sick. I renew my appreciation to those who, especially in this period, have offered and offer their witness of caring for neighbours. I recall with gratitude and admiration all those who, supporting the sick in this

pandemic, have given their lives. Let us pray in silence for the doctors, volunteers, nurses, all the healthcare workers and those who have given their lives in this period. I wish all of you a happy Pentecost Sunday. We have such need of the light and strength of the Holy Spirit! The Church needs it to walk harmoniously and courageously, witnessing to the Gospel. And the entire human family needs it, in order to emerge from this crisis more united and not more divided. You know that from a crisis like this one we do not come out the same, as before: we emerge either better or worse. May we have the courage to change, to be better, to be better than before and to be able to build in a positive way the post-crisis of the pandemic.

Please, do not forget to pray for me. Enjoy your lunch. *Arrivederci* [See you again], in the Square!