



The Holy See

SOLEMNITY OF THE ASCENSION OF OUR LORD

POPE FRANCIS

REGINA CAELI

*Saint Peter's Square
Sunday, 29 May 2022*

[\[Multimedia\]](#)

Dear brothers and sisters, buongiorno!

Today in Italy and in many countries, the Ascension of the Lord, that is, his return to the Father, is being celebrated. In the Liturgy, the Gospel according to Luke narrates the final apparition of the Risen Christ to the disciples (cf. 24:46-53). The earthly life of Jesus culminates precisely with the Ascension, which we also profess in the Creed: “He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of God the Father”. What does this event mean? How should we interpret it? To answer this question, let us focus on two actions that Jesus performs before ascending into Heaven: first of all, he *announces the gift of the Spirit*, and then he *blesses the disciples*. He announces the gift of the Spirit, and he blesses.

First of all, Jesus says to his friends: “I send the promise of my Father upon you” (v. 49). He is talking about the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, he who will accompany them, guide them, support them in their mission, defend them in spiritual battles. We thus understand something important: Jesus is not abandoning the disciples. He ascends to Heaven, but he does not leave them alone. Rather, precisely by ascending towards the Father, he ensures the *effusion of the Holy Spirit, of his Spirit*. On another occasion he had said: “It is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Counsellor will not come to you”, — that is, the Spirit — (Jn 16:7). In this too, we see Jesus’ love for us: his is a presence that does not want to limit our freedom. On the contrary, he

leaves space to us, because true love always generates a closeness that does not stifle, is not possessive, is close but not possessive; Indeed, true love makes us protagonists. And in this way, Christ reassures, “I will go to the Father, and you will be clothed with power from on high: I will send you my Spirit and with his strength, you will continue my work in the world!” (cf. *Lk* 24:49). Thus, ascending to Heaven, instead of remaining beside a few people with his body, Jesus becomes close to all with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit makes Jesus present in us, beyond the barriers of time and space, to make us his witnesses in the world.

Straight afterwards — it is the second action — Christ raises his hands and *blesses the apostles* (cf. v. 50). It is a priestly gesture. Ever since the times of Aaron, God had entrusted the task of blessing the people to priests (cf. *Nm* 6:36). The Gospel wants to tell us that *Jesus is the great priest of our life*. Jesus ascends to the Father to *intercede* on our behalf, to present our humanity to him. Thus, before the eyes of the Father, with the humanity of Jesus, there are and always will be our lives, our hopes, our wounds. So, as he makes his “exodus” to Heaven, Christ “makes way” for us. He goes to prepare a place for us and, from this time forth, he intercedes for us, so that we may always be accompanied and blessed by the Father.

Brothers and sisters, let us think today of the gift of the Spirit we have received from Jesus to be witnesses of the Gospel. Let us ask ourselves if we really are; and also, if we are capable of loving others, leaving them free and making room for them. And then: do we know how to make ourselves intercessors for others, that is, do we know how to pray for them and bless their lives? Or do we serve others for our own interests? Let us learn this: intercessory prayer, interceding for the hopes and sufferings of the world, interceding for peace. And let us bless with our eyes and our words those we meet every day!

Now let us pray to Our Lady, blessed among women, who, filled with the Holy Spirit, always prays and intercedes for us.

After the Regina Caeli, the Holy Father continued:

Yesterday, in Modena, Don Luigi Lenzini was beatified. He was a martyr to the faith, killed in 1945 for indicating Christian values as the high road of life, in the climate of hatred and conflict at that time. May this priest, a shepherd after the heart of Christ and a messenger of truth and justice, help us from Heaven to bear witness to the Gospel with charity and frankness. Let us applaud the new Blessed!

Today we are also celebrating World Day of Social Communications, on the theme *Listening with the ear of the heart*. In addition to being the first gesture of charity, knowing how to listen is also the first indispensable ingredient of dialogue and good communication: to know how to listen, to let

others say everything, not to cut them off halfway, knowing how to listen with the ears and with the heart. I hope that everyone may grow in this capacity to listen with the heart.

Today is National Relief Day in Italy. Let us remember that “patients are always more important than their diseases”, and that “even when healing is not possible, care can always be given. It is always possible to console, it is always possible to make people sense a closeness” (*Message for World Day of the Sick 2022*).

The day after tomorrow, the last day of the month of May, the liturgical feast of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, we will pray the Rosary for Peace in the Basilica of Saint Mary Major at 6:00 pm, linked up with various shrines in many countries. I invite the faithful, families and communities to join in with this invocation, to obtain from God, by the intercession of the Queen of Peace, the gift that the world awaits.

I greet you all, people of Rome and pilgrims. In particular, I greet the faithful from the Netherlands, Spain and Australia. I greet the parish of *San Roberto Bellarmino* in Rome, which is concluding the jubilee year for 400 years since the death of Saint Robert Bellarmine. I greet the Poles — there are always many Polish pilgrims! — with a blessing for those in their homeland who are participating in the major pilgrimage to the Marian shrine of Piekary Śląskie. I greet the pupils of the *San Vincenzo* school in Olbia and the candidates for Confirmation from Luras.

On Monday 29 and Tuesday 30 August a meeting will be held of all the cardinals to reflect on the new Apostolic Constitution *Praedicate evangelium*, and on Saturday 27 August, I will hold a Consistory for the creation of new cardinals. Here are the names of the new cardinals:

1. Archbishop Arthur Roche – prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments;
2. Archbishop Lazzaro You Heung-sik – prefect of the Congregation for the Clergy;
3. Archbishop Fernando Vérgez Alzaga L.C. – president of the Pontifical Commission for Vatican City State, and president of the Governorate of Vatican City State;
4. Archbishop Jean-Marc Aveline – metropolitan of Marseille, France;
5. Bishop Peter Ebere Okpaleke of Ekwulobia, Nigeria.
6. Archbishop Leonardo Ulrich Steiner, O.F.M., of Manaus, Brazil;
7. Archbishop Filipe Neri António Sebastião do Rosário Ferrão of Goa and Damão, India;

8. Bishop Robert Walter McElroy of San Diego, United States of America;
9. Archbishop Virgilio Do Carmo Da Silva, S.D.B., of Dili, East Timor;
10. Bishop Oscar Cantoni of Como, Italia;
11. Archbishop Anthony Poola of Hyderabad, India;
12. Archbishop Paulo Cezar Costa, metropolitan of the archdiocese of Brasília, Brazil;
13. Bishop Richard Kuuia Baawobr M. Afr., of Wa, Ghana;
14. Archbishop William Goh Seng Chye of Singapore, Singapore;
15. Archbishop Adalberto Martínez Flores, metropoiltan of Asunción, Paraguay;
16. Bishop Giorgio Marengo, I.M.C., prefect Apostolic of Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia.

Along with the above, I will add to the members of the College of Cardinals:

1. Archbishop Jorge Enrique Jiménez Carvajal, emeritus of Cartagena, Colombia;
2. Archbishop Lucas Van Looy, S.D.B., emeritus of Ghent, Belgium;
3. Archbishop Arrigo Miglio, emeritus of Cagliari, Italy;
4. Rev Father Gianfranco Ghirlanda S.J., – professor of theology;
5. Rev Msgr. Fortunato Frezza – canon of Saint Peter.

I wish you a blessed Sunday! Please, do not forget to pray for me. Enjoy your lunch. *Arrivederci!*