



## The Holy See

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Dear brothers and sisters, happy Sunday!

I consider it a gift from God that the first Sunday of my service as Bishop of Rome is Good Shepherd Sunday, the fourth Sunday of Easter. On this Sunday, we always hear proclaimed at Mass a passage from the tenth chapter from the Gospel of John, where Jesus reveals himself as the true Shepherd: who knows and loves his sheep and gives his life for them.

This Sunday also marks the World Day of Prayer for Vocations, which we have celebrated for the last sixty-two years. Rome is also hosting the Jubilee of Bands and Popular Entertainment today. I greet all these pilgrims with affection and thank them because, with their music and performances, they enliven the feast of Christ the Good Shepherd: the One who guides the Church with his Holy Spirit.

In the Gospel, Jesus says that he knows his sheep and that they listen to his voice and follow him (cf. Jn 10:27). Indeed, as Pope Saint Gregory the Great teaches, people “respond to the love of those who love them” (Homily 14:3-6).

Today brothers and sisters, I therefore have the joy of praying with you and all the People of God for vocations, especially those to the priesthood and consecrated life. The Church has such a great need for them! It is important that young men and women on their vocational journey find *acceptance*, *listening* and *encouragement* in their communities, and that they can look up to credible models of generous dedication to God and to their brothers and sisters.

Let us take up the invitation that Pope Francis left us in his [Message for today](#): the invitation to welcome and accompany young people. And let us ask our heavenly Father to assist us in living in service to one another, each according to his or her state of life, shepherds after his own heart (cf. Jer 3:15) capable of helping one another to walk in love and truth. And to young people, I say: “Do not be afraid! Accept the invitation of the Church and of Christ the Lord!”

May the Virgin Mary, whose entire life was a response to the Lord’s call, always accompany us in following Jesus.

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## After the Regina Caeli

Dear brothers and sisters,

The immense tragedy of the Second World War ended eighty years ago, on 8 May, after having claimed sixty million victims. In today's dramatic scenario of a piecemeal third world war, as Pope Francis stated many times, I too address the world's leaders, repeating the ever-timely appeal: "Never again war!".

I carry in my heart the sufferings of the beloved Ukrainian people. May everything possible be done to reach an authentic, just and lasting peace, as soon as possible. Let all the prisoners be freed and the children return to their own families.

I am deeply saddened by what is happening in the Gaza Strip: may there be an immediate ceasefire! Let humanitarian aid be provided to the stricken civil population, and let all the hostages be freed.

On the other hand, I have welcomed with satisfaction the announcement of the ceasefire between India and Pakistan, and I hope that through the upcoming negotiations, a lasting accord may be reached soon.

But how many other conflicts there are in the world! I entrust this heartfelt appeal to the Queen of Peace, so that she may present it to the Lord Jesus to obtain for us the miracle of peace.

And now I affectionately greet you all, Romans and pilgrims from various countries. I greet the members of the British and Foreign Bible Society, the group of doctors from Granada (Spain), the faithful of Malta, Panama, Dallas (Texas), Valladolid, Torrelodones (Madrid), Montesilvano, and Cinisi (Palermo).

I greet the participants in the "Let's choose life" demonstration, the young people of the Fraternity of Blessed Mary Immaculate and Saint Francis of Assisi, of Reggio Emilia.

Today in Italy and in other countries we celebrate Mother's Day. I send a fond greeting to all mothers, with a prayer for them, and for those who are already in Heaven.

Happy Mother's Day to all mothers!

Thank you all, a happy Sunday to everyone!

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