



SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE
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Pastoral Visit of the Holy Father Francis to Venice – The Pope's words at the Regina Caeli prayer

At the end of the Eucharistic celebration presided over in Saint Mark's Square, the Holy Father Francis led the recitation of the *Regina Caeli* prayer.

Before leaving the Square, the Pope entered the Basilica privately to venerate the relics of the Saint. Then, after boarding the motorboat, he returned to the internal courtyard of the Women's Prison on the Island of Giudecca from where, after taking leave of the civil and religious authorities who had welcomed him on arrival, he departed for Rome by helicopter. Pope Francis arrived in the Vatican at 14.40 and returned to the Casa Santa Marta.

The following are the Pope's words of introduction to the Marian prayer:

Dear brothers and sisters!

Before concluding our celebration, I wish to greet all of you who have participated. I thank the Patriarch, Francesco Moraglia, from my heart, and with him all the collaborators and volunteers. I am grateful to the civil authorities and the police, who have enabled this visit to take place. Thank you!

Also from here, like every Sunday, let us invoke the intercession of the Virgin Mary for the many situations of suffering in the world.

I am thinking of Haiti, where a state of emergency is in force and the population is desperate due to the collapse of the healthcare system, the scarcity of food and the violence that is driving people to flee. Let us entrust to the Lord the work and decisions of the new Transitional Presidential Council, which took office last Thursday in Port-au-Prince, so that, with the renewed support of the international Community, it may lead the country to achieve the peace and stability it so badly needs.

I think of beleaguered Ukraine, Palestine and Israel, of the Rohingya and the many populations who suffer because of war and violence. May the God of Peace enlighten hearts so that the will for dialogue and reconciliation may grow in everyone.

Dear brothers and sisters, thank you again for your welcome! Thank you to the Patriarch. I carry you with me in prayer; and you too, please, do not forget to pray for me, because this job is not easy!
