



The Holy See

POPE FRANCIS

REGINA CAELI

Saint Peter's Square
Sunday, 21 May 2023

[\[Multimedia\]](#)

Dear brothers and sisters, *buongiorno!*

In Italy and in many other countries, the Ascension of the Lord is being celebrated today. It is a feast we know well, but which can raise several questions — at least two. The first question: Why celebrate Jesus' departure from earth? It would seem that his departure would be a sad moment, not exactly something to rejoice over! Why celebrate a departure? First question. Second question: What does Jesus do now in heaven? First question: Why celebrate? Second question: What does Jesus do in heaven?

Why we celebrate. Because with the Ascension, something new and beautiful happened: Jesus brought our humanity, our flesh, into heaven — this is the first time — that is, he brought it in God. That humanity that he had assumed on earth did not remain here. The risen Jesus was not a spirit, no. He had his human body, flesh and bones, everything. He will be there in God forever. We could say that from the day of the Ascension on, God himself “changed” — from then on, he is not only spirit, but such is his love for us that he bears our own flesh in himself, our humanity! The place awaiting us is thus indicated; that is our destiny. Thus wrote an ancient Father in the faith: “What splendid news! He who became man for us [...] to make us his brothers, presents himself as man before the Father to bear with himself all those who are joined with him” (cf. St. Gregory of Nyssa, *Discourse on the Resurrection of Christ*, 1). Today, we celebrate “heaven’s conquest” — Jesus, who returns to the Father, but with our humanity. And so, heaven is already a little bit ours. Jesus opened the door and his body is there.

The second question: So, *what does Jesus do in heaven?* He is there for us before the Father, continually showing our humanity to him — showing him his wounds. I like to think that Jesus, prays like this in front of the Father — showing him his wounds. “This is what I suffered for humanity: Do something!” He shows him the price of redemption and the Father is moved. This is something I like to think about. This is how Jesus prays. He did not leave us alone. In fact, before ascending, he told us, as the Gospel says today, “I am with you always, to the close of the age” (*Mt 28:20*). He is always with us, he looks at us, and “he always lives to make intercession” (*Heb 7:25*) for us. To show the Father his wounds, for us. In a word, Jesus *intercedes*. He is in the best “place”, before his Father and ours, to intercede on our behalf.

Intercession is fundamental. This faith helps us too: it helps us not to lose hope, not to be discouraged. Before the Father, there is someone who shows him the wounds and intercedes. May the Queen of heaven help us to intercede with the power of prayer.

After the Marian prayer, the Holy Father continued:

Dear brothers and sisters, it is sad, but, a month after the outbreak of violence in Sudan, the situation continues to be serious. While encouraging the partial agreements reached so far, I renew my heartfelt appeal for the laying down of weapons, and I ask the international community to spare no effort to make dialogue prevail and to alleviate the suffering of the people. Please, let us not get used to conflict and violence. Let us not get used to war. And let us continue to be close to the tormented Ukrainian people.

World Communications Day is being celebrated today, with the theme *Speaking with the heart*. It is the heart that moves us towards open and receptive communication. I greet the journalists and communication professionals present here. I thank them for their work and I hope that it will always be at the service of the truth and the common good. A round of applause for all the journalists!

Today, *Laudato Si'* Week begins. I thank the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development and the many participating organizations. And I invite everyone to collaborate in the care of our common home. There is a great need to bring together our skills and creativity! Recent disasters remind us of this, such as the flooding that struck Emilia-Romagna in these days, to whose people, I renew my nearness, with all my heart. Now, booklets on *Laudato Si'*, prepared by the Dicastery in collaboration with the Stockholm Environment Institute, will be distributed in the Square.

I greet all of you, people from Rome and pilgrims from Italy and from many countries — I see many flags. Welcome! I especially greet the Franciscan Sisters of Saint Elizabeth from Indonesia

— from far away; the faithful from Malta, from Mali, from Argentina, from the Caribbean Island, Curaçao, and the musical band from Puerto Rico. We would like to hear you play, later!

I also greet the diocesan pilgrimage from Alessandria; Confirmation candidates from the Diocese of Genoa whom I met with yesterday at Santa Marta with the red hats over there. Bravi!; the parish groups from Molise, Scandicci, Grotte and Grumo Nevano; the associations committed to protecting human life; the “Emil Komel” youth Choir from Gorizia; “Catherine of Saint Rose” and “Saint Ursula” schools from Rome; and the youth of the Immacolata.

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