

Worldwide Rosary for Peace

On Tuesday, 31 May, at 6pm (Rome time), the Pope will pray the Rosary before the statue of Mary Regina Pacis in Rome's Marian Basilica, for peace in Ukraine.

05/29/2022

Link to Vatican Media live-streaming of the Rosary at 6 pm in Rome

Regina Caeli Address (29 May):

*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 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, he *announces the gift of the Spirit* – 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. And so, we 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 – that is, the Spirit – will not come to you” (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; on the

contrary, true love which 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*). And so, 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. God, since the times of Aaron, had entrusted to priests the task of blessing the people (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.

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