



The Holy See

POPE FRANCIS

REGINA CAELI

Saint Peter's Square

Sixth Sunday of Easter, 5 May 2024

[[Multimedia](#)]

Dear brothers and sisters, good morning!

Today the Gospel tells us about Jesus who says to the Apostles: “No longer do I call you servants, but friends” (cf. *Jn* 15:15). What does this mean?

In the Bible, the “servants” of God are special people to whom He entrusts important missions, as for example Moses (cf. *Ex* 14:31), King David (cf. *2 Sam* 7:8), the prophet Elijah (cf. *1 Re* 18:36), up to the Virgin Mary (cf. *Lk* 1:38). They are people in whose hands God places his treasures (cf. *Mt* 25:21). But according to Jesus, all this is not enough to say who we are for him. It is not enough: more is required, something greater, that goes beyond goods and plans themselves: it takes *friendship* .

As children, we learn about the beauty of this experience: we offer our friends our toys and the most beautiful gifts; then as we grow up, as teenagers, we confide our first secrets to them; as young people we offer our loyalty; as adults we share satisfactions and worries; as seniors we share the memories, the respect and the silences of long days. The Word of God, in the Book of Proverbs, tells us that “Oil and perfume make the heart glad, and the sweetness of a friend comes from his earnest counsel”. (27:9a) Let us think about our friends for a moment and thank the Lord for them! A moment to think about them.

Friendship is not the fruit of calculation, nor of compulsion: it arises spontaneously when we

recognize something of ourselves in the other. And if it is true friendship, it is so strong that it does not fail even in the face of betrayal. “A friend loves at all times” (*Prov . 17:17*) — states the Book of Proverbs again — as Jesus shows us when he says to Judas, who betrays him with a kiss: “Do what you came for, friend!” (cf. *Mt 26:50*). A true friend does not abandon you, even when you make mistakes: he corrects you, perhaps he reproaches you, but he forgives you and does not abandon you.

And today in the Bible, Jesus tells us that for him we are precisely this, friends: people who are dear beyond all merit and expectation, to whom he extends his hand and offers his love, his Grace, his Word; with whom — with us, friends — he shares what is dearest to him, all that he has heard from the Father (cf. *Jn 15:15*). Even to the point of making himself fragile for us, of placing himself in our hands without defence or pretence, because he loves us. The Lord loves us. As a friend he wants our good and he wants us to share in his.

And so let us ask ourselves: what face does the Lord have for me? The face of a friend or of a stranger? Do I feel loved by him as a loved one? And what is the face of Jesus that I show to others, especially to those who err and need forgiveness?

May Mary help us to grow in friendship with her Son and to spread it around us.

After the Regina Caeli, the Holy Father continued:

Dear brothers and sisters, I send my affectionate best wishes to our brothers and sisters of the Orthodox Churches and to some of the Eastern Catholic Churches who are celebrating Holy Easter today, according to the Julian Calendar. May the Risen Lord fill all the communities with joy and peace, and comfort those who are facing adversity. Happy Easter to them!

I assure my prayers for the people of the State of Rio Grande do Sul in Brazil, who have been stuck by major floods. May the Lord receive the deceased and comfort their relatives and those who have had to leave their homes.

I greet the faithful of Rome and various parts of Italy and the world, in particular the pilgrims from Texas, from the Archdiocese of Chicago and from Berlin; students from the Saint-Jean de Passy School of Paris and the Human Life International group. I greet the young people of Certaldo and Lainate; the faithful of Ancona and Rossano Cariatì; candidates for confirmation from Cassano D’Adda, the pastoral unit of Tesino and the parish of Santa Maria del Rosario in Rome. And I greet and warmly thank the musical bands from various parts of Italy: thanks to you, who have played so well, and I hope that you will continue to play a little. Thank you! I greet the “Francigeni

Monteviale” group, as well as the citizens of Livorno and Collesalveti, who have been waiting for the reclamation of some of the most polluted areas, for a long time. Let us pray for them.

I offer a warm greeting to the new Swiss Guards and their families, on the occasion of the feast of this historic and praiseworthy Corps. A round of applause for the Swiss Guards!

It is a pleasure to welcome the “Meter” Association, which is engaged in combating against all forms of abuse against minors. Thank you, thank you for your commitment! And continue your important work with courage.

And please, let us continue to pray for martyred Ukraine — it suffers a great deal! — and also for Palestine and Israel, that there may be peace and that dialogue may be strengthened and bear good fruit. No to war, yes to dialogue!

I wish everyone a happy Sunday. Please do not forget to pray for me. I greet the young people of the Immacolata, who are so good. Enjoy your lunch. *Arrivederci!*