



The Holy See

POPE FRANCIS

REGINA CAELI

Library of the Apostolic Palace

Sunday, 17 May 2020 [\[Multimedia\]](#)

*Dear Brothers and Sisters,
Good Morning!*

This Sunday's Gospel passage (cf. Jn 14:15-21) presents two messages: observance of the commandments and the promise of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus links love for him to observance of the commandments, and he insists on this in his farewell discourse: "If you love me, then you will keep my commandments" (v. 15); "He who has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me" (v. 21). Jesus asks us to love him, but explains: this love does not end in a desire for him, or in a feeling, no; it demands the willingness to follow his way, that is, the will of the Father. And this is summarized in the commandment of mutual love — the first love [in its fulfillment] — given by Jesus himself: "even as I have loved you, that you also love one another" (Jn 13:34). He did not say, 'Love me as I have loved you', but 'love one another as I have loved you'. He loves us without asking us to do the same in return. Jesus' love is a gratuitous love; he never asks for the same in return. And he wants this gratuitous love of his to become the concrete form of life among us: this is his will.

To help the disciples walk this path, Jesus promises to pray for the Father to send "another Counselor" (v. 16), that is, a Consoler, a Defender, who will take his place and give them the intelligence to listen and the courage to observe his words. This is the Holy Spirit, who is the Gift of God's love that descends into the heart of the Christian. After Jesus has died and risen, his love is given to those who believe in him and are baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit himself guides them, enlightens them, strengthens them, so that everyone may walk in life, even through adversity and difficulty, in joys and sorrows, remaining on Jesus' path. This is possible precisely by remaining docile to the Holy Spirit, so that, through his

presence at work in us, he may not only console but transform hearts, opening them up to truth and love.

Faced with the experience of error and sin — which we all do — the Holy Spirit helps us not to succumb and enables us to grasp and fully live the meaning of Jesus' words: "If you love me, you will keep my commandments" (v. 15). The commandments are not given to us as a kind of mirror in which to see the reflection of our miseries, our inconsistencies. No, they are not like that. The Word of God is given to us as the Word of life, which transforms the heart, life; which renews, which does not judge in order to condemn, but heals and has forgiveness as its aim. God's mercy is thus. A Word that is light for our steps. All this is the work of the Holy Spirit! He is the Gift of God; he is God himself, who helps us to be free people, people who want and know how to love, people who understand that life is a mission to proclaim the wonders that the Lord accomplishes in those who trust in him.

May the Virgin Mary, model of the Church, who knows how to listen to the Word of God and to welcome the gift of the Holy Spirit, help us to live the Gospel with joy, knowing that we are sustained by the Spirit, the divine fire that warms our hearts and illuminates our steps.

After the Regina Caeli, the Holy Father continued:

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Tomorrow is the centenary of the birth of [Saint John Paul II](#), in Wadowice, Poland. Let us remember him with great affection and gratitude. [Tomorrow morning, at 7 o'clock, I will celebrate Holy Mass, which will be broadcast throughout the world](#), at the altar where his mortal remains rest. From Heaven may he continue to intercede for the People of God and for peace in the world.

In some countries liturgical celebrations with the faithful have resumed; in others the possibility is being considered. In Italy, beginning tomorrow it will be possible to celebrate Holy Mass with the people; but please, let us proceed with the rules, the recommendations they give us, so as to protect the health of each person and of the people.

In the month of May, in many parishes it is traditional to celebrate Masses for First Communion. Clearly, due to the pandemic, this beautiful moment of faith and celebration has been postponed. Therefore I wish to send an affectionate thought to the boys and girls who should have received the Eucharist for the first time. Dear boys and girls, I invite you to experience this time of waiting as an opportunity to prepare yourselves better: by praying, reading your catechism book to deepen your knowledge of Jesus, and growing in goodness and in service to others. I wish you a good journey.

Today is the beginning of Laudato Si' Week, which will end next Sunday, in which we remember the fifth anniversary of the publication of the Encyclical. In these times of the pandemic, in which we are more aware of the importance of care for our common home, I hope that all the common reflection and commitment may help to create and strengthen constructive attitudes for the care of creation.