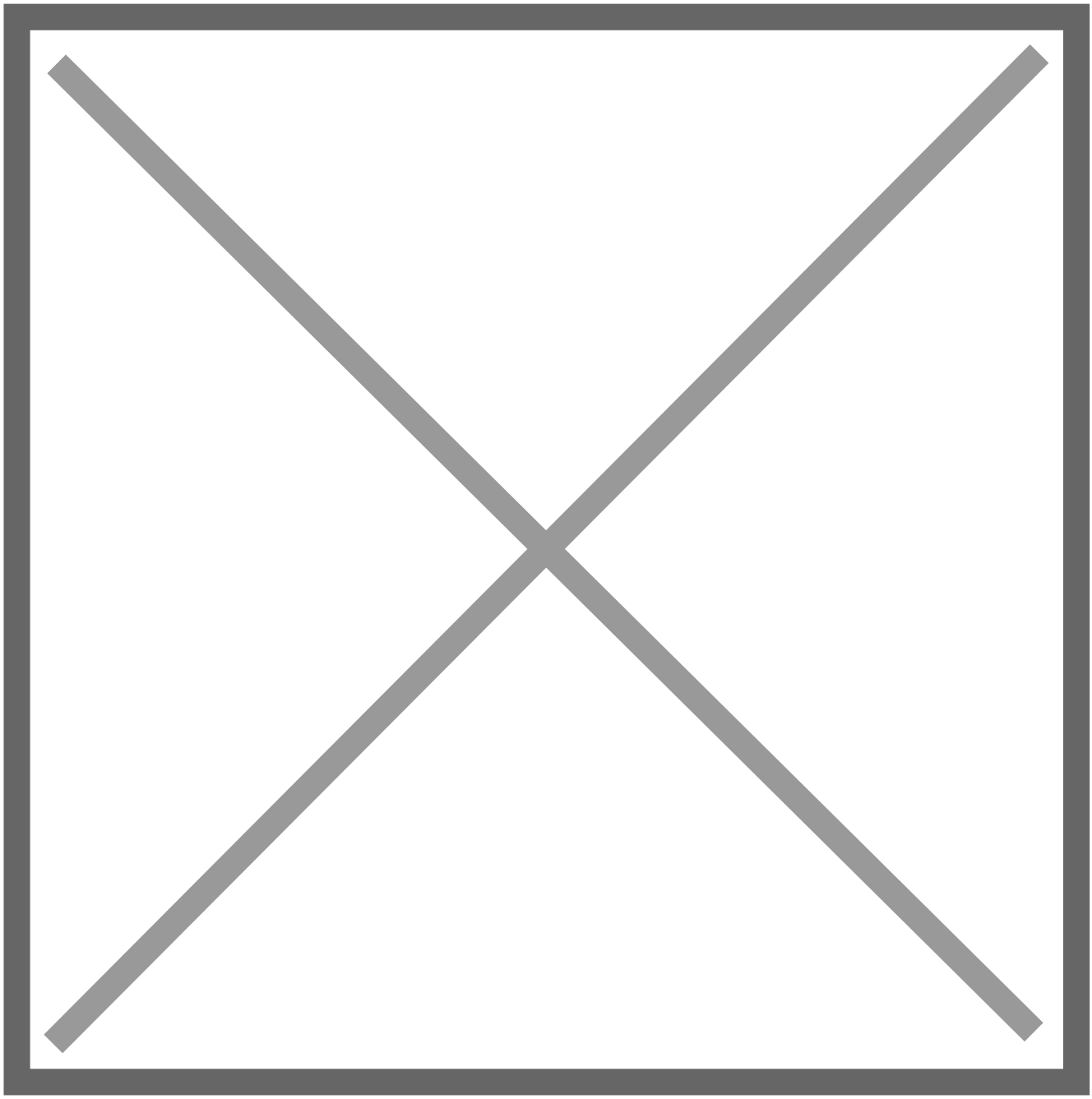
Vatican
Francis, the comic strip



Family members attend Pope Francis' recitation of the "Regina Coeli" from the window of his studio overlooking St. Peter's Square at the Vatican April 18, 2021. (CNS/Paul Haring)

Carol Glatz

View Author Profile



Catholic News Service

View Author Profile

Join the Conversation

Send your thoughts to *Letters to the Editor*. Learn more

Vatican City — April 19, 2021
Share on BlueskyShare on FacebookShare on TwitterEmail to a friendPrint

Greeting visitors in St. Peter's Square after nearly a month of tight restrictions due to the pandemic, Pope Francis said he was happy to see people allowed to gather and be present for Sunday noonday prayer.

"I offer a warm greeting to all of you, people of Rome and pilgrims," he said, pointing out the many flags he could see being held high.

A few hundred people, all wearing masks and socially distanced, attended the recitation of the "Regina Coeli" prayer April 18 after nearly a month of tighter controls on gatherings in an ongoing attempt to curb the spread of the coronavirus.

"Thanks be to God, we can find ourselves again in this square for the Sunday and holiday appointment," he said, adding how much he misses greeting people in the square when he must recite the midday prayer inside the apostolic library.

"I am happy, thanks be to God! And thank you for your presence," he said to applause.

In his main talk, Francis said Jesus is a real living person whose presence always leaves the person encountering him astonished, which "goes beyond enthusiasm, beyond joy; it is another experience" that is profoundly beautiful.

He said the day's Gospel reading of the risen Christ's appearance to the disciples in Jerusalem, "tells us that Jesus is not a 'ghost,' but a living person," who fills people

with joy.

"Being Christian is not first of all a doctrine or a moral ideal; it is a living relationship with him, with the risen Lord: we look at him, we touch him, we are nourished by him and, transformed by his love, we look at, touch and nourish others as brothers and sisters," he said.

Jesus invites his disciples to truly look at him, which involves "intention, will" and an attitude of loving care and concern, he said.

More than seeing, it is the way parents look at their child, "lovers gaze at each other, a good doctor looks at the patient carefully. ... looking is a first step against indifference, against the temptation to look the other way before the difficulties and sufferings of others," the pope said.

By inviting the disciples to touch him, he said, Jesus shows that a relationship with him and with one's brothers and sisters "cannot remain at a distance" but requires a love that looks and comes close, making contact, sharing and "entering into a communion of life, a communion with him."

And the verb, to eat, clearly expresses "our humanity," he said, and "our need to nourish ourselves in order to live."

When people come together to eat, it becomes "an expression of love, an expression of communion, of celebration," which is why "the eucharistic banquet has become the emblematic sign of the Christian community. Eating together the body of Christ: this is the core of Christian life," the pope said.

Advertisement