

The meaning of the “Regina Caeli” prayer?

The “Regina Caeli”, or “Queen of Heaven”, is a beautiful Marian prayer, shorter than the Angelus, which expresses joy at the Resurrection of Jesus. Unlike the Angelus, there is no one commonly used English translation, but for the sake of those who do not know it, I offer the following as one of the more frequently used versions. The prayer is said with the leader saying the first line and the others saying each alternate verse.

As is evident, the “Regina Caeli” overflows with the joy proper to the Easter season. The Blessed Virgin Mary, Queen of Heaven, is invited to rejoice at the Resurrection of her Son. In the final prayer we ask God the Father that, as we have been filled with joy through the Resurrection, so we may come to experience the joys of eternal life. Thus the sobriety of Lent, with its fasting and preparation for Our Lord’s death, gives way to rejoicing as we commemorate the Resurrection of Jesus and are moved to ask for our own resurrection to eternal happiness in Heaven.

The Meaning of “Alleluia”.

The word “Alleluia”, sometimes spelled “Halleluia” or “Halleluja”, means essentially “Praise the Lord” or “Hail the one who is”. It is made up of the Hebrew verb for praise (“Allelu”) and the proper name of God, “the One who is” (“ia”), as in the name Yahweh. The latter recalls the answer God gave when Moses asked him for his name: “I am who I am”, Yahweh (Ex 3:14). The word “ia” is thus not the generic name for God, but the specific name for the God who revealed himself to the Israelites as “I am”.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church comments on the name of God: “In revealing his mysterious name, YHWH (‘I AM HE WHO IS’, or ‘I AM WHO I AM’), God says who he is and by what name he is to be called. This divine name is mysterious just as God is mystery... God, who reveals his name as ‘I AM’, reveals himself as the God who is always there, present to his people in order to save them” (CCC 206-207).

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