

The Regina Coeli

Easter joy with the Mother of the risen Lord

A bilingual prayer text and source-first study

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1 The Prayer

The Regina Coeli is both an Easter Marian antiphon and, in an expanded form, a pious exercise of the Latin Church prayed in place of the Angelus during Easter Time. Its repeated alleluia joins Mary's joy to the Resurrection of the Son she bore. The form below includes the four-line antiphon, its versicle and response, and the customary collect.

This bilingual text reproduces Dom Gaspar Lefebvre's 1925 *Daily Missal with Vespers for Sundays and Feasts*, printed pp. 13–14. The spelling, capitalization, punctuation, stress accents, and historical English have not been modernized or translated by this project. The source begins the prayer at the foot of p. 13 and continues it on p. 14.

The Regina Coeli

Text and status: Received Latin and historical English from Lefebvre's 1925 *Daily Missal*, pp. 13–14. The source's historical season, posture, and indulgence rubric is discussed separately and is not a statement of current discipline.

Latin

*Regína coeli laetáre, allelúia;
Quia quem meruísti portáre, allelúia:
Resurréxit sicut dixit, allelúia:
Ora pro nobis Deum, allelúia.*

V. *Gaude et laetáre, Virgo María, allelúia.*

R. *Quia surréxit Dóminus vere, allelúia.*

Orémus.

*Deus, qui per resurrectionem Filii tui Dómini nostri
Jesu Christi mundum laetificáre dignátus es: praesta,
quaesumus; ut per ejus Genitricem Virginem Mariám,
perpétuae capiámus gáudia vitae. Per eúndem
Christum Dóminum nostrum.*

R. *Amen.*

English

Joy to thee, O Queen of heaven, alleluia!
He Whom thou wast meet to bear, alleluia,
As He promis'd, hath arisen, alleluia;
Pour for us to Him thy prayer, alleluia.

V. Rejoice and be glad, O Virgin Mary, alleluia.

R. For the Lord hath risen indeed, alleluia.

Let us pray.

O God, Who didst vouchsafe to give joy to the world
through the resurrection of Thy Son our Lord Jesus
Christ; grant, we beseech Thee, that through His
Mother, the Virgin Mary, we may obtain the joys of
everlasting life. Through the same Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

One may pray the Latin, the historical English, or another received form devotionally; the prayer need not be doubled. A vernacular form used for an indulgenced recitation requires approval by competent ecclesiastical authority, and a liturgical celebration follows its governing book. This witness spells the title *Regina coeli*; the 1999 *Enchiridion* prints *Regina caeli*, modern *Iesu* and *eius*, and a shorter *Per Christum* conclusion. Those current forms are not silently substituted for this 1925 witness.

2 The Joy of the Mother and the Victory of Her Son

Textual movement: The invitation to rejoice

Principal loci: Luke 1:28; Directory on Popular Piety 196

Doctrinal center: Mary's Easter joy answers the greeting first brought by Gabriel. Its source and object are God's saving work in her risen Son.

Textual movement: The Son borne and risen

Principal loci: Luke 1:31–35; Matthew 28:5–7

Doctrinal center: The one conceived and borne by Mary is the Lord who truly rises as he promised. Incarnation and Paschal Mystery belong to one economy of salvation.

Textual movement: Prayer with and through Mary

Principal loci: *Lumen gentium* 60–62; CCC 970

Doctrinal center: Mary's intercession is created, maternal, and wholly dependent on Christ's unique mediation. The collect asks God for everlasting joy through Christ.

2.1 The risen Lord at the center

The title names Mary, but every movement centers on Christ. The relative clause “He Whom thou wast meet to bear” remembers the Incarnation; “hath arisen” proclaims the Paschal event; “as He promis’d” recalls the Gospel announcement that the Lord was raised just as he had said (Matt 28:6). The Congregation for Divine Worship therefore describes the prayer as joining the mystery of the Word’s taking flesh to the saving event of his Resurrection (Directory 196).

The four alleluias do more than mark a season. They surround bearing, promise, Resurrection, and intercession with the Church’s Easter praise. The prayer does not ask Mary to produce the Resurrection or its joy. God raised the Son; the Christian voice invites his Mother to rejoice in what God has done.

2.2 Queen of Heaven under Christ the King

Mary’s title is derived, not parallel. Pius XII’s *Ad caeli Reginam* grounds her queenship in her relation to the Incarnate Son and in her graced participation in his saving work, while reserving kingship in the full and strict sense to Christ. “Queen of heaven” therefore confesses what God has given the Mother of the King; it does not assign her an independent sovereignty, divinity, or source of grace.

The Latin *quem meruisti portare*, rendered here by the received English “Whom thou wast meet to bear,” names Mary’s unique graced dignity and vocation. It does not mean that she earned the Incarnation by autonomous merit or placed God in her debt. The initiative remains God’s, and Mary’s blessedness is itself gift and faithful response.

2.3 A new announcement of joy

Gabriel’s greeting in Luke 1 announces both favor and the Son whom Mary will conceive. The Regina Coeli sounds that greeting again after the Paschal victory. Benedict XVI called the prayer a kind of new Annunciation: Christians now invite Mary to rejoice because the Son she bore has risen as he promised. The parallel is theological and devotional, not a claim that Scripture records a second angelic visit to Mary after Easter.

Mary’s joy remains ecclesial rather than private. The collect asks that the Resurrection which gladdens the world lead *us* to the joys of everlasting life. Christian joy can therefore coexist with suffering and costly fidelity; it rests finally on Christ’s victory and promised life, not on a passing mood or a guaranteed temporal outcome.

2.4 Intercession under Christ’s unique mediation

“Pour for us to Him thy prayer” asks Mary to intercede with God. It neither makes her the source of grace nor places her beside Christ as another redeemer. Vatican II teaches that every saving influence attributed to Mary depends entirely on Christ’s one mediation and draws all its power from him (LG 60–62; CCC 970). The grammar of the devotion enacts that order: the petition to Mary leads into a collect addressed to God and concluded through Christ our Lord.

The phrase “through His Mother” in the historical English renders a prayer for joy through Mary’s maternal intercession. It does not mean that divine life originates in her or bypasses the Son. Her blessedness, cooperation, and prayer are gifts within the salvation accomplished by Christ.

3 An Easter Antiphon and a Daily Exercise

The Regina Coeli has two related but distinct uses. The four-line text is a Marian antiphon in the Roman liturgical tradition. In the current Liturgy of the Hours it is the Marian antiphon appointed at the end of Compline during Easter Time (General Instruction of the Liturgy of the Hours 92). The expanded form adds a versicle, response, and collect and functions as the popular exercise that replaces the Angelus during the Easter season (Directory 196). Praying that exercise at dawn, noon, or evening is not the celebration of Compline merely because the exercise incorporates a liturgical antiphon.

3.1 Anonymous medieval formation

No securely identified author or single composition event governs the received history. The Directory says the prayer probably dates from the tenth or eleventh century. That is a responsible estimate, not an attribution certificate.

A twelfth-century Old Roman antiphoner of St. Peter's, Vatican Apostolic Library Arch.Cap.S.Pietro.B.79, fol. 110r, places the antiphon at second Vespers within the Octave of Easter. Its wording is already substantially recognizable, though its last line reads *Ora pro nobis ad Deum*. The Directory's note also points to a twelfth-century antiphonary from the Abbey of San Lupo at Benevento. These witnesses securely establish medieval liturgical reception while leaving earlier authorship unresolved.

Stage	Checked evidence	Limit
Probable early formation	The Directory dates the prayer probably to the tenth or eleventh century.	The date is approximate; no named author or complete origin narrative is established.
Twelfth-century witness	The St. Peter's antiphoner B.79 transmits the antiphon for the Easter Octave; the Directory identifies another Benevento witness.	Manuscript attestation proves use by that time, not one place of composition or textual uniformity.
Daily Easter substitution	Benedict XIV's action of 20 April 1742 belongs to the papally regulated substitution of the Regina Coeli for the Angelus in Easter time.	The act concerns reception and discipline, not authorship of the medieval antiphon.
Hand-missal reception	Lefebvre's 1925 missal prints a bilingual expanded form with historical season, posture, and indulgence directions.	That edition witnesses practice in its own period; its disciplinary rubric is not current law.

The official English Directory page prints "2 April 1742," but its official Italian counterpart prints **20 April 1742**, the date also supported by the historical indulgence record. This study uses 20 April and treats the shortened English date as a typographical error.

3.2 Reception without a manufactured legend

Later devotional accounts sometimes carry the prayer much further back or attach it to a famous pope. Such stories may show affection for the antiphon, but they do not overcome the documentary limits above. The defensible historical description is modest: an anonymous medieval Easter antiphon, securely witnessed in the twelfth century, later received as the seasonal complement to the Angelus.

The shift from liturgical antiphon to expanded daily exercise need not be reduced to one moment. The added versicle announces that the Lord has truly risen; the collect asks that the Resurrection which gave joy to the world bring the faithful, through Mary's intercession, to everlasting life. Together they make the antiphon's Paschal confession usable in the recurring daily rhythm associated with the Angelus.

4 Easter Prayer Through the Day

4.1 From Easter Sunday through Pentecost

The Directory 196 says the Regina Coeli replaces the Angelus during Easter Time. Under the current Roman calendar, Easter Time comprises the fifty days from Easter Sunday through Pentecost Sunday inclusive. This present boundary differs from the 1925 missal's historical direction, which ran from noon on Holy Saturday until noon on the Saturday before Trinity Sunday. Follow the current calendar and competent local books rather than silently carrying that older schedule forward.

The ordinary daily rhythm remains early morning, midday, or toward evening. These are recurring thresholds, not universally fixed clock minutes. A sustainable practice may connect the prayer with the beginning of work, a midday pause, and the close of labor. The devotion is recommended rather than imposed on every Christian; missing a time is not a violation of a universal precept.

4.2 Ordinary, solemn, and liturgical forms

One person may say both the versicle and response, while a group may alternate them. A community may sing the antiphon. The Directory also proposes that a more solemn popular celebration may include proclamation of a Resurrection Gospel. Such enrichment should direct attention to the Paschal Mystery rather than turn the exercise into a substitute Mass or an improvised liturgical hour.

The 1925 witness says the prayer is recited standing. Standing remains an intelligible Easter custom and bodily sign of resurrection joy, but the current indulgence grant does not make posture a condition. Likewise, a bell may summon a community to prayer without being necessary to the prayer's validity or current indulgenced use.

When the Regina caeli is prayed as part of the Liturgy of the Hours, the governing liturgical book controls its text, translation, placement, and manner. When its expanded form replaces the Angelus, it is a popular exercise. The shared antiphon does not erase that distinction.

4.3 Current indulgence discipline

As checked on 21 July 2026, the Apostolic Penitentiary's fourth *Enchiridion Indulgentiarum* (1999), concession 17 §2, 2°, grants a *partial* indulgence to a member of the faithful who piously recites the Angelus with its appointed exchanges and collect early in the morning, at midday, or toward evening; during Easter Time it names the Regina caeli with its customary prayer instead.

The Latin alternatives mean that one pious recitation at one of the named times is the prescribed work. All three times form the recommended traditional rhythm, but they are not a set that must be completed before any indulgence can be gained. The grant remains subject to the *Enchiridion*'s general norms: the faithful must be baptized, not excommunicated, and in the state of grace at least when the work is completed; have at least the general intention of gaining the indulgence; perform the work duly; and, for a partial indulgence, act with at least a contrite heart (norms 4 and 17). A vernacular prayer used for the indulgence requires approval by competent ecclesiastical authority (norm 22). These are not the additional conditions proper to a plenary indulgence.

The current grant states no requirement to hear a bell, stand, pray in a church, or add the Glory Be. It does not create an obligation to recite the devotion.

Lefebvre's 1925 rubric says that the same indulgences could be gained as for the Angelus and directs standing. Later historical collections describe quantified partial indulgences and periodic plenary grants under conditions then applicable. Paul VI's *Indulgentiarum doctrina* (1967) abolished the former measurement of partial indulgences in days or years and required a revised collection. Those superseded measurements and conditions must not be represented as the present grant.

An indulgence is an exercise of the Church's ministry within the life of conversion. It is not forgiveness purchased by recitation, a calculation of time in purgatory, or permission to neglect sacramental reconciliation, restitution, amendment of life, or charity.

A Scope, Status, and Qualifications

A.1 Identity and coverage

This is a source-first reference and usable bilingual prayer aid for the Regina Coeli in the Latin Church's Catholic liturgical and devotional tradition. It covers one received expanded form, scriptural and doctrinal architecture, medieval witnesses, the distinction between antiphon and popular exercise, the seasonal handoff from the Angelus, responsible practice, and the current universal indulgence grant as printed in the Latin typical edition. It does not

catalogue every manuscript variant, chant setting, territorial translation, religious-community custom, papal public addition, historical grant, or form in other rites.

The governing profile is the Marian-prayer addendum in `guidance/theology/mariology.md`. Current liturgical claims concern the postconciliar Roman Liturgy of the Hours and the current Roman calendar. Current indulgence discipline is identified with the Apostolic Penitentiary’s fourth *Enchiridion Indulgentiarum*, promulgated in 1999 and checked through 21 July 2026. Territorial translations and practice should be verified with the competent bishops’ conference or local authority.

A.2 Text, translation, and rights

The reproduced Latin and English Regina Coeli come from Dom Gaspar Lefebvre’s *Daily Missal with Vespers for Sundays and Feasts* (1925), printed pp. 13–14, corresponding to PDF pp. 47–48 of the checked scan. Both pages were visually collated. The checked file has SHA-256 `28c9046c5acfa19297ab9aeaa14ac4f8d8fcffab1307b51215b94fa4ca6172a2`. The title matter records historical ecclesiastical permissions for that edition; they neither approve this publication nor establish its English as a current liturgical translation.

The 1925 edition is public domain in the United States by publication date. Its title page nevertheless says “All rights reserved,” and this study has not established authorship or non-US status for the exact historical English translation; non-US translation rights therefore remain unresolved. The received Latin prayer and historical English are excluded from Triptych’s CC BY 4.0 grant. Project-created exposition, arrangement, and design fall under that grant. No current proprietary vernacular liturgical translation is reproduced.

The current Apostolic Penitentiary and other Holy See sources are cited and closely paraphrased rather than reproduced in English as a substitute edition. Scripture is cited by book and verse; no modern copyrighted biblical translation is reproduced in bulk. The Vatican Library manuscript is consulted as evidence; no manuscript image is reproduced.

A.3 Historical and doctrinal limits

The history distinguishes an approximate origin date, surviving manuscript witnesses, later papal reception, one 1925 devotional edition, and current discipline. It does not claim a named author, prove a legendary attribution, or infer that every textual addition entered at one moment. The St. Peter’s antiphoner proves use in its own twelfth-century liturgical setting and preserves a variant; it is not silently normalized into the reproduced 1925 form.

Mary’s joy and intercession are interpreted under Christ’s unique mediation. The study offers no automatic spiritual effect, private promise, guarantee of emotional consolation, or assurance of salvation from vocal recitation. Its practical applications are editorial pastoral synthesis, not spiritual direction or binding law.

A.4 Review state

Completed internally: governing-source identification; prayer-text and page-image collation; claim-to-source audit; liturgical-antiphon and popular-exercise distinction; current-discipline and superseded-rule separation; rights review; generation-metadata validation; settled two-pass build; log, metadata, font, text, page-geometry, and PDF-structure checks; and visual inspection of every rendered page. Exact production details and the reviewed PDF hash are recorded in `research/scope.md`.

Outstanding: independent human collation of the Latin and historical English; independent Mariological, theological, liturgical, historical, Latin, legal, rights, and pastoral review; and any ecclesiastical review or approval. “Source-audited” describes internal evidence work only.

B References

B.1 Received prayer, liturgical use, and present discipline

- Dom Gaspar Lefebvre, O.S.B., *Daily Missal with Vespers for Sundays and Feasts* (Lophem near Bruges: St. Andrew's Abbey; St. Paul, Minnesota: E. M. Lohmann, 1925), printed pp. 13–14, edition scan. Governing Latin and historical-English prayer witness; its seasonal, posture, and indulgence directions are historical only.
- Apostolic Penitentiary, *Enchiridion Indulgentiarum: Normae et Concessionones*, fourth edition (16 July 1999), norms 4, 17, and 22; concession 17 §2, 2°; and the printed Latin prayer: Holy See Latin text. Governs the current universal indulgence claim as checked through 21 July 2026 and identifies the antiphon's Easter-Time Liturgy of the Hours source.
- Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship, *General Instruction of the Liturgy of the Hours*, second typical-edition context, no. 92, English text published by the Liturgy Office of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales. Governs the Compline antiphon claim.
- Paul VI, apostolic constitution *Indulgentiarum doctrina* (1 January 1967), norms and concluding dispositions: Holy See text. Governs the break with older quantified partial-indulgence discipline.

B.2 Doctrine, Scripture, and devotional ordering

- Luke 1:26–38 and Matthew 28:1–10; Latin checked in the *Nova Vulgata*, Luke 1 and Matthew 28.
- Second Vatican Council, dogmatic constitution *Lumen gentium* (21 November 1964), 53, 56, 59–62: Holy See text; and *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 963–975, especially 966 and 970: Holy See text.
- Pius XII, encyclical *Ad caeli Reginam* (11 October 1954), especially 8–9, 30, 34, and 39: Holy See text. Governs the derived and analogous sense of Mary's queenship under Christ the King.
- Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, *Directory on Popular Piety and the Liturgy* (2001), 7, 183–186, and especially 196: official English text; official Italian text for the correct date, 20 April 1742. Governs the seasonal substitution, likely date, theological architecture, and devotional suggestions.
- Benedict XVI, Regina Caeli address for Easter Monday (24 March 2008), Holy See text, on the prayer as a new Easter announcement of joy to Mary.
- United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, “Easter,” presenting the Universal Norms' current Easter-Time boundary. Used for the current calendar statement, not as the reproduced prayer witness.

B.3 Historical witnesses and reception

- Vatican Apostolic Library, Arch.Cap.S.Pietro.B.79, fol. 110r, digital facsimile; Cantus Index record and source description. Twelfth-century Old Roman antiphoner witness, used for date, liturgical placement, text, and the *ad Deum* variant; no image is reproduced.
- Apostolic Penitentiary, decree of 20 February 1933, *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 25 (1933): 70–71, in the official volume scan. Historical survey of papal indulgence concessions and changes; its quantified grants are not current discipline.

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