

# Share Easter joy, defend persecuted Christians, pope says

**By Cindy Wooden Catholic News Service**

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Christians live the joy of the Resurrection when they share a smile with someone, weep with those who mourn and defend the rights of those persecuted for their faith, Pope Francis said.

Reciting the “Regina Coeli” prayer with thousands of people gathered in St. Peter’s Square during Easter Mass on April 6, the pope demanded defense and protection for “our brothers and sisters persecuted, exiled, killed and decapitated just because they are Christians.”

“I hope the international community will not stand by mute and inert before such an unacceptable crime, which constitutes a worrying deviation from the most elementary human rights,” he said. “The international community cannot look the other way.”

Pope Francis said the good news of Jesus’ Resurrection and the promise of new life for all the baptized is something “we are called to bring to others.” It is “the most beautiful gift a Christian can give his brothers and sisters.”

Easter joy, he said, should be obvious on the faces of Christians, “in our sentiments and attitudes, in the way we treat others.”

“We proclaim the Resurrection of Christ when his light brightens the dark moments of our existence,” the pope said.

“And we can share that with others when we learn to smile with those who smile and cry with those who cry, when we walk alongside those who are sad and risk losing their hope, (and) when we talk about our faith experience with those who are searching for meaning and happiness.”

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