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**HOLY FATHER'S ALLOCUTION BEFORE
"REGINA COELI"
the 29th April**

Beloved Sisters and Brothers!

1. Today is a day of great joy for all of us: the Church venerates two new Blesseds, Francis Coll and Jacques Laval. We have just concluded the solemn liturgical celebration, but I wish to return briefly to these two exceptional figures of witness to the Gospel and true catechists in the past century.

Francis Coll, a son of Spain, born at Gombreny, a village in the Catalan Pyrenees, followed the Dominican vocation. When convents were closed by law in that nation in 1835, Francis, always remaining faithful to his religious consecration, dedicated himself to preaching the Word of God, by means of "popular missions", and in August 1856 he founded at Vich the Dominican Sisters of "La Anunciata", devoted particularly to the education of girls. His death took place in April 1875.

Jacques Laval is a son of France. Born at Croth, in the diocese of Evreux, in 1803, he was first a doctor; and after inner struggles, he surrendered finally to the call of Jesus. Ordained priest in 1838, in 1841 he left for the island of Mauritius to dedicate himself to the evangelization of the Blacks, becoming a Mauritian with the Mauritians. He remained in that island—until his death, which took place in 1864—for 23 years, dedicated entirely to proclaiming the Gospel in the midst of difficulties insuperable on the human plane.

The whole Church is exultant at the gift that God has made to her of two other intercessors in heaven and two examples to imitate on earth. It is joy also for me, because Francis Coll and Jacques Laval are the first Blesseds of my Pontificate and I hope they will be my protectors.

At this exalting moment I wish to express hearty congratulations to the two Religious Families, the Dominican Order—which is also celebrating today the liturgical feast of St Catherine of Siena, Patroness of Italy—and the Congregation of the Holy Spirit; they have enriched the Church and humanity and have the immense satisfaction and privilege of having given us these sons of theirs. Nor can we forget to address our thought of sincere applause to their respective countries, Spain and France, and for Blessed Laval also to his country of adoption, the island of Mauritius. The Church is particularly grateful to them for this further, magnificent gift of holiness.

The personalities of the two Blessed, so rich, so open to the spiritual and social problems of the modern world, urge us to renew the hope that all peoples, all nations, all continents may be represented in the earthly Church, on her way to her fulfilment in eternal glory.

2. The two new Blessed propose to us again concretely the ever existing urgency of Jesus' mandate to the apostles and to the Church: "Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to the whole creation" (Mk 16:15).