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The Pope profoundly saddened by the air accident in Russia and the attack in Istanbul

Vatican City, 20 March 2016 – Cardinal Secretary of State Pietro Parolin, on behalf of the Holy Father, has sent a telegram of condolences to the Russian authorities following the air accident that occurred in the early hours of the morning on 19 March, in which a FlyDubai aircraft crashed upon landing at the airport of Rostov-on-Don, killing all 62 passengers and crew members on board.

The Pope expresses his profound sadness for the tragic accident, and his sincere condolences to the relatives and friends of the victims. He commends the souls of the dead to the mercy of Almighty God and implores the divine gifts of consolation, strength and hope upon all who mourn their loss.

Likewise the Pope, again through Cardinal Parolin, sent a message of condolences to the Turkish president, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, following the terrorist attack in the centre of Istanbul on Saturday morning, in which five people were killed and more than thirty injured. The Holy Father expresses his sadness to learn of the casualties and his prayerful solidarity with all touched by the tragedy. He asks the president to convey his spiritual closeness to them, as well as to the personnel assisting the injured. Commending the souls of those who have died to the mercy of the Almighty, Pope Francis invokes divine strength and peace upon those who mourn, and upon the entire nation.