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SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE

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Celebration of Holy Mass in Laurentino Cemetery

At 15.35 this afternoon, in the *Commemoration of all the departed faithful*, the Holy Father Francis visited the Laurentino Cemetery to celebrate Holy Mass.

During the trip, Pope Francis made a brief stop in the area of the cemetery where children are buried, and after praying for a few minutes, left some bouquets of white flowers on some tombs.

Immediately afterwards, in front of the Church of Risen Jesus, located within the cemetery, the Pope was received by the vicar of Rome, His Eminence Cardinal Angelo De Donatis; by the auxiliary bishop for the South Sector, H.E. Msgr. Paolo Lojudec; by the chaplain of the Church of Risen Jesus, Msgr. Claudio Palma, and by the mayor of Rome, Virginia Raggi.

At 16.00 the Eucharistic celebration took place in front of the Chapel dedicated to "Risen Jesus".

The following is the transcript of the Holy Father's impromptu homily, pronounced during the Holy Mass:

Homily of the Holy Father

Today's liturgy is realistic, it is concrete. It locates us within the three dimensions of life, dimensions that even children understand: the past, the future, the present.

Today is a day of *memorial of the past*, a day to remember those who walked before us, who also accompanied us, who gave us life. Remember, remember. Memory is what makes a people strong, because it feels rooted in a journey, rooted in a history, rooted in a people. Memory makes us aware that we are not alone, we are a people: a people with a history, with a past, with a life. The memory of many who have shared a journey with us, and who are here [indicates the tombs around]. It is not easy to remember. Very often we struggle to look back at what has happened in our life, in our family, in our people ... But today is a day of memory, the memory that

takes us to the roots: to our roots, to roots of our people.

And today is also a day of hope: the second reading made us see what awaits us. A new heaven, a new earth and the holy city of Jerusalem, new. It uses a beautiful image to make us understand what awaits us: "I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband" (*Rev 21: 2*). Beauty awaits us... Memory and hope, the hope to meet each other, the hope of arriving where there is the Love that He has created for us, where there is the Love that awaits us: the love of the Father.

And between memory and hope there is the third dimension: that of the *road* we must take and that we are taking. And how can we travel this road without making mistakes? What are the *lights* that help us not to take the wrong street? What is the "navigator" that God Himself has give us, so as not to take the wrong path? They are the Beatitudes, which Jesus taught us in the Gospel. These Beatitudes – meekness, poverty in spirit, justice, mercy, purity of heart – are the lights that accompany us so we do not take the wrong road: this is our *present*.

In this cemetery there are the three dimensions of life: memory, we can see it here [indicates the tombs]; hope, which we celebrate not in faith, not in vision; and the lights to guide us along the path so as not to take the wrong road, we have heard in the Gospel: they are the Beatitudes.

Today let us ask the Lord to give us the grace of never losing our memory, of never hiding memories – memory of a person, memory of a family, memory of a people – and that He give us the grace of hope, because hope is a gift of His: knowing how to hope, looking to the horizon, never staying closed in front of a wall. Always look to the horizon and to hope. And may He give us the grace to understand what are the lights that will accompany us on the path so as not to err, and in this way to arrive where they await us with so much love.
