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Video Message of the Holy Father at the end of the International Ecumenical Vigil organised by CHARIS

The following is the text of the video message sent by the Holy Father Francis at the end of the International Ecumenical Vigil organised by CHARIS, through the Commission for Christian Unity, in the Anglican Christ Church in Jerusalem:

Video Message of the Holy Father

Although this recording is being made in Rome, it will be released in the Anglican Church of Christ, Christ Church, in Jerusalem, where believers of different Christian traditions have gathered.

I would like to thank this Anglican Church for its hospitality, to thank the people who made this broadcast possible, and, first of all, to thank my brother and friend, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, who shared with us a beautiful reflection on the Holy Spirit.

I also thank Charis, for having listened to me and realising in this vigil the mission I entrusted to it to work for Christian unity. You have organised this Christian vigil through the Commission you constituted for the purpose, a commission made up of five Catholics and five members of different Churches and Christian communities. Thank you.

This is a very special night. I want to share with you what is in my heart when I think of Jerusalem, the holy city for the children of Abraham. I think of the the upper room, where the Father's envoy, the Holy Spirit that Jesus promises after His resurrection, descends powerfully on Mary and the disciples, transforming their lives and the whole of history forever.

I am thinking of the Church of Saint James, the Mother Church, the first, the Church of believers in Jesus, the Messiah, all of them Jews. The Church of Saint James that never disappeared from history. It is alive today. I think of the following morning. They were residing in Jerusalem, the *Acts of the Apostles* tell us, devout Jews

from all nations, who were “filled with wonder” when they heard those Galileans speaking in their language.

And further on, the account describes the community of believers in Jesus: no one was in need because they held everything in common. And the people said of them: “See how they love each other”. Brotherly love defines them. *And the presence of the Spirit makes them comprehensible*. This night the words “See how they love each other” resound in me more than ever. How sad it is when people say of Christians, “Look how they quarrel”. Can the world today say of Christians, “Look how they love each other”, or can it truthfully say “Look how they hate each other” or “Look how they quarrel”? What has happened to us? We have sinned against God and against our brothers. We are divided, we have broken into a thousand pieces what God so lovingly, passionately and tenderly made. We all need to ask forgiveness from the Father of us all, and we also need to forgive ourselves.

If Christian unity in mutual love has always been necessary, today it is more urgent than ever. Let us look at the world: the plague, the effect not only of a virus, but also of the selfishness and greed that make the poor poorer and the rich richer. Nature is reaching the limit of its possibilities as a result of man’s predatory action. Yes, man, to whom God entrusted the care and fruitfulness of the earth.

Brothers and sisters, this night can be a prophecy, it can be the beginning of the witness that we Christians, together, must give to the world: to be witnesses of God's love that has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us. The love to which we believers in Jesus have been called. So that tonight thousands of Christians will raise the same prayer together, from the corners of the earth: come Holy Spirit, come Spirit of Love, and change the face of the earth, and change my heart.

Tonight I urge you to go out into the world and make reality and a testimony of the first Christian community: “See how they love each other”. Go out together to spread this around the world! Let us be changed by the Holy Spirit so that we can change the world. God is faithful, He never reneges on His promise, and for this reason, because God is faithful, I wish to recall today from Jerusalem, that prophecy of the great prophet of Israel: “It shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be raised above the hills; and all the nations shall flow to it, and many peoples shall come, and say: “Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; that He may teach us His ways and that we may walk in His paths”. For our of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. He shall judge between the nations and shall decide for many peoples; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more” (*Isaiah 2, 2-4*).

So be it.
