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## Video Message of the Holy Father Francis on the occasion of his imminent Apostolic Trip to Egypt (28-29 April 2017)

The following is the full text of the Holy Father's video message, to be broadcast this morning to the Egyptian people on the occasion of the imminent apostolic trip in Egypt.

### Video Message of the Holy Father

Dear people of Egypt! *Al Salamò Alaikum!* Peace be with you!

With a joyful and grateful heart I will come in a few days' time to visit your dear homeland: cradle of civilization, gift of the Nile, land of sun and hospitality, where Patriarchs and Prophets lived and where God, Clement and Merciful, the One and Almighty, made His voice heard.

I am truly happy to come as a friend, as a messenger of peace and as a pilgrim to the Country that gave, more than two thousand years ago, refuge and hospitality to the Holy Family fleeing from the threats of King Herod (cfr. Mt 2:1-26). I am honoured to visit the land visited by the Holy Family!

I greet you cordially and thank you for having invited me to visit Egypt, which you call "*Umm il Dugna*" / Mother of the Universe!

I warmly thank Mr. President of the Republic, His Holiness the Patriarch Tawadros II, the Great Imam of Al-Azhar and the Coptic Catholic Patriarch who have invited me; and I thank each one of you, who make space for me in your hearts. I also thank all those people who have worked, and are working, to make this trip possible.

I hope that this visit will be an embrace of consolation and of encouragement to all Christians in the Middle East; a message of friendship and esteem to all inhabitants of Egypt and the region; a message of fraternity and reconciliation to all children of Abraham, particularly in the Islamic world, in which Egypt occupies a primary position. I hope that it may also offer a valid contribution to interreligious dialogue with the Islamic world, and to ecumenical dialogue with the venerated and beloved Coptic Orthodox Church.

Our world, torn by blind violence, which has also afflicted the heart of your dear land – needs peace, love and mercy; it needs workers for peace, free and liberating people, courageous people able to learn from the past to build a future without closing themselves up in prejudices; it needs builders of bridges of peace, dialogue, brotherhood, justice, and humanity.

Dear Egyptian brothers, young and elderly, women and men, Muslims and Christians, rich and poor ... I embrace you warmly and ask God Almighty to bless you and protect your country from every evil.

Please, pray for me! *Shukran wa Tahiai Misr!* / Thank you, and long live Egypt!

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