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Three prayers for the victims of migration

Vatican City, 16 April 2016 – Three prayers for the victims of migrations concluded the encounter between Pope Francis, Archbishop Ieronymos and the Patriarch Bartholomew and the people of Lesbos in the port of Mytilene, in whose waters the three religious leaders cast laurel wreaths, presented by three children from the island, in memory of those who have lost their lives in the Mediterranean, after observing a minute's silence.

The Archbishop of Athens and All Greece began, saying:

"O God of all spirits and flesh, Who has trodden down death, destroying the power of the devil, bestowing life on Your world to the soul of Your servants departed this life, do You Yourself, O Lord, give rest in a place of light, in a place of green pasture, in a place of refreshment, from where pain and sorrow and mourning are fled away. Every sin by them committed in thought, word, or deed, do You as our good and loving God forgive, seeing that there is no man that shall live and sin not, for You alone are without sin: Your righteousness, and Your law is truth.

"For You are the Resurrection, the Life, and the Repose of Your servants, O Christ our God; and to You do we send up Glory, as to Your Eternal Father and Your All-Holy, Good, and Life-creating Spirit, both now and ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen".

Patriarch Bartholomew then went on to say his prayer: " Lord of mercy, compassion and all comfort, we pray to You for our brothers in difficult circumstances and we offer to Your Goodness.

"Nurture the infants; instruct the youth; strengthen the aged; give courage to the faint hearted; reunite those separated; sail with those who sail; travel with those who travel; defend the widows; protect the orphans; liberate the captives; heal the sick. Remember, O God, those who are in mines, in exile, in harsh labor, and those in every kind of affliction, necessity, or distress; and all those who entreat Your loving kindness; those who love us and those who hate us; and pour out upon all Your rich mercy, granting them their petitions for salvation

"Again we pray, Lord of life and of death, grant eternal repose to the souls of Your departed servants, those who lost their lives during their exodus from war-torn regions and during their journeys to places of safety, peace and

prosperity.

"For You, Lord, are the helper of the helpless, the hope of the hopeless, the savior of the afflicted, the haven of the voyager, and the physician of the sick. Be all things to all, You who know each person, his requests, his household, and his need. Deliver this island, O Lord, and every city and country, from famine, plague, earthquake, flood, fire, sword, invasion of foreign enemies, and civil war. Amen".

Finally, Pope Francis raised his prayer:

"Merciful God, we pray to You for all the men, women and children who have died after leaving their homelands in search of a better life. Though many of their graves bear no name, to You each one is known, loved and cherished. May we never forget them, but honour their sacrifice with deeds more than words.

"We entrust to You all those who have made this journey, enduring fear, uncertainty and humiliation, in order to reach a place of safety and hope. Just as You never abandoned Your Son as He was brought to a safe place by Mary and Joseph, so now be close to these, Your sons and daughters, through our tenderness and protection. In caring for them may we seek a world where none are forced to leave their home and where all can live in freedom, dignity and peace.

"Merciful God and Father of all, wake us from the slumber of indifference, open our eyes to their suffering, and free us from the insensitivity born of worldly comfort and self-centredness. Inspire us, as nations, communities and individuals, to see that those who come to our shores are our brothers and sisters. May we share with them the blessings we have received from Your hand, and recognise that together, as one human family, we are all migrants, journeying in hope to You, our true home, where every tear will be wiped away, where we will be at peace and safe in Your embrace".

Following the prayers, the three leaders transferred by minibus to the airport, where the Pope met privately first with Archbishop Ieronymus, then with Patriarch Bartholomew, and finally with the prime minister Alexis Tsipras.

At 3 p.m. local time, 2 p.m. in Rome, following the farewell ceremony, the Pope greeted the respective delegations, and departed for Rome, where he is expected to arrive at 4.30 (Rome time).
