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5 May: prayer vigil in St. Peter's Basilica to "dry the tears of physical or spiritual suffering"

Vatican City, 3 May 2016 – On 5 May, the solemnity of the Ascension of the Lord, the Pope will preside at a prayer vigil in St. Peter's Basilica to "dry faces streaked with the tears of a physical or spiritual suffering, bringing consolation and hope".

The event, that takes place in the context of the Jubilee Year, is intended as a visible sign of the merciful hand of the Father that reaches out to dry the tears of a mother or a father who has lost a child, of a child who has lost his or her parents, of those who battle against sickness, of those who have lost their job or are unable to find employment, of those who experience situations of discord in the family, of those who are alone because they are elderly, of those who suffer from existential malaise, of those who have suffered injustice, of those who have lost the meaning of life or are unable to find it. There are many and varied types of suffering, great or small, that each person carries within them, but they are all characterised by the "hardship" they cause in life and often a lack of hope and trust.

On the occasion of the vigil, the faithful in St. Peter's Basilica will be able to venerate the reliquary of Our Lady of Tears of Syracuse, linked to the prodigious phenomenon that took place between 29 August and 1 September 1953, when a plaster image representing the immaculate heart of Mary, placed above the bed in the house of a young married couple, Angelo Iannuso and Antonina Giusto, shed human tears.