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Angelus: the Pope recalls the steadfast faith of St. Peter and the great universal heart of St. Paul

Vatican City, 30 June 2016 – In today's midday Angelus with the faithful gathered in St. Peter's Square, the Pope recalled the feast of the apostles Peter and Paul, underlining that their faith was the foundation of the Church of Rome, which has always venerated them as patrons. "However", he added, "it is the whole universal Church that looks to them with admiration, considering them two columns and two great lights that shine not only in the sky of Rome, but also in the heart of believers of East and West".

The Gospel account of the mission of the Apostles tells us that Jesus sent them two by two. In a certain sense, Peter and Paul were also sent from the Holy Land to Rome to preach the Gospel. "The two men were very different from one another", Francis explained; "Peter a 'humble fisherman', and Paul a 'teacher and doctor'. ... but, if we know Jesus here in Rome, and if the Christian faith is a living and fundamental part of the spiritual patrimony and of the culture of this territory, it is due to the apostolic courage of these two sons of the Near East. Out of love for Christ, they left their homeland and, heedless of the difficulties of the long trip and of the risks and distrust they would encounter, they came to Rome. Here they made themselves heralds and witnesses of the Gospel among the people, and they sealed their mission of faith and charity with martyrdom".

"Today Peter and Paul return ideally among us: they walk the streets of this city, knocking on the door of our homes, and above all our hearts. Once again they want to bring Jesus, His merciful love, His consolation, His peace. We are in great need! Let us receive their message! Let us cherish their testimony! The pure and solid faith of Peter and the great and universal heart of Paul will help us to be joyful Christians, faithful to the Gospel and open to an encounter with all", said the Pope, who went on to commend the whole world and in particular the city of Rome to the Virgin Mary, *Salus Populi Romani*, so that it "may always find, in the spiritual and moral values by which it is enriched, the foundation of its social life and mission in Italy, in Europe and in the world".

Following the Marian prayer, Pope Francis spoke about the Saturday night terrorist attack on the airport in Istanbul, Turkey, which caused 41 deaths and 239 injuries, and asked those present to pray a minute in silence for those affected. "Let us pray for the victims, for their relatives, and for the beloved Turkish people. May the Lord convert the hearts of the violent and support our steps on the path of peace".

He also mentioned the International Conference on responsible investments with a social impact, entitled "Make of the Year of Mercy a Year of Impact for the Poor," recently concluded in Rome, and expressed his hope that

private and public investments may help many marginalised people to overcome poverty.

Finally, he greeted the faithful of Rome, celebrating the feast of their patron saints, and thanked them for the floral representations – streets carpeted with images made up of flowers by artists volunteers of the Civil Service – and for the pyrotechnic show in Piazza del Popolo, the proceeds of which will support charitable works in the Holy Land and in countries of the Middle East.
