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Video Message of the Holy Father for the Mérida Holy Week

The following is the text of the video message sent by the Holy Father Francis on the occasion of the proclamation of the Holy Week of Mérida, Spain:

Video Message of the Holy Father

Dear confrères of Mérida,
dear Emeritensians,
brothers and sisters,

Thank you for letting me take part in the Proclamation of your Holy Week, unique in the world, because very few cities can relive those days that changed the history of humanity in settings of over 2000 years of antiquity, contemporary to those in which Christ suffered the Passion.

This year, as I participate in the prayer of the Via Crucis next to the Colosseum in Rome, I will keep in mind that you too will be celebrating in the impressive Roman amphitheatre of Mérida, which brings together faithful from all over the world.

You also in the midst of the Eulalia Jubilee Year, in which you honour the figure of the child martyr Saint Eulalia, whose cult has turned Mérida into the cradle of Hispanic Christianity and a destination for pilgrimages throughout history.

I remember perfectly when the archbishop of Mérida-Badajoz, Don Celso Morga, the mayor Antonio Rodríguez Osuna, and the president of the Saint Eulalia Association, Luis Miguel González, came to Rome to explain to me all the projects that are being undertaken in this important jubilee year.

I now address all the Confraternities of Mérida, all of them, who work throughout the whole year to ensure that

the Holy Week leaves a sign, an indelible and permanent sign in the life of all those who contemplate the Stations of Penance. It is not a show; it is a proclamation of our salvation, and therefore it must leave a sign.

In this year's Lenten Message, I recalled that during Holy Week it is necessary to devote time to prayer, to welcome the Word of God, to stop like the Samaritan before the wounded brother: "Love of God and love of neighbour are one love... In the presence of God, we become brothers and sisters, more sensitive to one another", instead of imaging them as enemies and increasingly separating ourselves from them.

Holy Week is a time of grace, let us not forget; it is a time of grace that the Lord gives us so that we can open the doors of our hearts, our parishes, our confraternities. To "open" and to "go out" is what we are asked to do in Holy Week, to open the heart and go towards Jesus and others, and also to bring the light and joy of our faith. Always go out! And do so with the love and tenderness of God, with respect and patience, knowing that we give our hands, our feet, our heart, but it is God who guides us and shows us the way.

Dear Emeritensian brothers and sisters, I pray for you, especially for the families who have a loved one who is sick, for those who are alone, for those in need, for those who are experiencing economic difficulties, and also for the young, who are the present and the future of the Confraternity of Mérida.

I wish you a fruitful Holy Week under the protection of Saint Eulalia, and I send you my Blessing, and I ask you, please, not to forget to pray for me. Thank you!
