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The Pope returns to Rome with three families of refugees

Vatican City, 16 April 2016 – The director of the Holy See Press Office, Fr. Federico Lombardi, S.J., has issued the following statement:

"The Pope has desired to make a gesture of welcome regarding refugees, accompanying on his plane to Rome three families of refugees from Syria, 12 people in all, including six children. These are all people who were already in camps in Lesbos before the agreement between the European Union and Turkey.

The Pope's initiative was brought to fruition through negotiations carried out by the Secretariat of State with the competent Greek and Italian authorities.

All the members of the three families are Muslims. Two families come from Damascus, and one from Deir Azzor, in the area occupied by Daesh. Their homes had been bombed.

The Vatican will take responsibility for bringing in and maintaining the three families. The initial hospitality will be taken care of by the Sant'Egidio Community".