



# SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE **BOLLETTINO**

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## **Pastoral visit of the Holy Father to Carpi – Holy Mass in Piazza Martiri**

At 8.15 this morning the Holy Father departed by helicopter from the Vatican heliport for his pastoral visit to Carpi.

Upon arrival at the “Dorando Pietro” rugby field, the Pope was received by the bishop of Carpi, His Excellency Msgr. Francesco Cavina, by the president of the Emilia-Romagna region, Hon. Stefano Bonaccini, the prefect of Modena, Maria Patrizia Paba, and the mayor of Carpi, Alberto Bellelli, who gave the Holy Father a brick from the *Fossoli Concentration Camp*.

The Holy Father then transferred by Popemobile to Piazza Martiri where, at 10.30, he presided at the Eucharistic celebration.

At the end of the Holy Mass, the bishop of Carpi, His Excellency Msgr. Francesco Cavina, addressed some words of thanks to the Pope.

During the rite, after the proclamation of the Holy Gospel, Pope Francis pronounced the following homily:

### **Homily of the Holy Father**

Today’s readings speak of the God of life Who conquers death. Let us dwell, in particular, on the last of the miraculous signs wrought by Jesus before His Passover, at the tomb of His friend, Lazarus.

There, it seems that everything is over: the tomb is closed by a large stone, and around there is only weeping and desolation. Even Jesus is shaken by the dramatic mystery of the loss of a loved one: “He is deeply moved” and “greatly troubled” (Jn 11:33). Then He “wept” (v. 35) and went to the tomb, the Gospel says, “once more, deeply moved” (v. 38). And this is the heart of God: far from evil, but close to those who suffer; He does not make evil disappear magically, but sharing in suffering, He adopts and transforms it, abiding in it.

We note however, that amid the general desolation over the death of Lazarus, Jesus does not allow Himself to be carried away by distress. Although He suffers Himself, He calls for steadfast belief; not closed up in tears, but, moved, He sets out towards the tomb. He does not allow Himself to be caught up in the emotional atmosphere of resignation that surrounds Him, but prays trustfully and says, "Father, I thank you" (v. 41). Thus, in the mystery of suffering, before which rationality and progress are crushed like flies on a glass pane, Jesus offers us an example of how to behave: not to escape from suffering, which belongs to this life, but not to allow oneself to be imprisoned by pessimism.

Around the tomb, there is a great encounter and clash. On one side, there is great disappointment, the precariousness of our mortal life that, infused with anguish at death, often experiences defeat, an inner darkness that appears insurmountable. Our soul, created for life, suffers from feeling that its thirst for eternal good is oppressed by an ancient and obscure evil. On the one hand, there is this defeat of the tomb. But on the other, there is the hope that overcomes death and evil and that has a name: hope is called Jesus. He does not bring a little well-being or some remedy to prolong life, but proclaims, "I am the Resurrection and the Life; he who believes in me, though he die, shall live" (v. 25). He therefore says decisively: "Take away the stone" (v. 39) and to Lazarus He calls loudly: "Come out!" (v. 43).

Dear brothers and sisters, we too, are invited to decide which side to take. You can stand on the side of the tomb or the side of Jesus. There are those who are closed in by sadness and those who are open to hope. There are those who are still trapped in the rubble of life and those who, like you, with the help of God, rise up from the rubble and rebuild with patient hope.

Faced with the great "why" of life, we have two options: to sit back and look with melancholy on the tombs of yesterday and today, or to bring Jesus to our tombs. Yes, because each of us already has a small tomb, an area that is a bit "dead" inside the heart: a wound, an wrong suffered or committed, a bitterness that gives no respite, a remorse that returns repeatedly, a sin that it is difficult to overcome. Let us identify these, our little tombs, and invite Jesus there. It is strange, but often we prefer to be alone in the dark caves we have inside, instead of inviting Jesus; we are tempted to always look to ourselves, brooding and anguished, licking our wounds, rather than go to Him, He Who says, "Come to me you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest" (Mt 11:28). Let us not be imprisoned by the temptation of staying alone and disheartened, of feeling sorry for ourselves, for what happens to us; let us not yield to the pointless and inconclusive logic of fear, resigned to repeat that everything is wrong and nothing is like it used to be. This is the atmosphere of the tomb; the Lord wants to instead to open up the way of life, that of the encounter with Him, of trust in Him, of the resurrection of the heart, the way that says "Get up! Get up, come out!" That is what the Lord asks of us, and He is next to us as we do it.

We feel the words of Jesus to Lazarus addressed to each of us: "Come out!"; come out of the gridlock of sadness without hope; loosen the bonds of fear that obstruct the path, the fetters of weakness and apprehension that block you, repeat that God unties knots. Following Jesus we learn not to tie up our lives around problems that become tangled: there will always be problems, always, and when we solve one, another one promptly arrives. We can, however, find a *new stability*, and this stability is Jesus, this stability is called Jesus, Who *is* the resurrection and life. With Him joy abides in the heart, hope is reborn, pain becomes peace, fear becomes trust, and hardships become offerings of love. And even though there will be no lack of burdens, there will always be the hand that lifts us up, His Word that encourages and tells all of us, every one of us: "Come out! Come to me!". He says to all of us, "Do not be afraid".

To us too, today as before, Jesus says, "Take away the stone!". However heavy the past may be, however great the sin or strong the shame, let us never bar entry to the Lord. Let us remove from before Him that stone that prevents Him from entering: this is the right time to remove our sin, our attachment to worldly vanities, the pride that blocks the soul, all the iniquities between us, in families. This is the right moment to remove all these things.

Visited and freed by Jesus, let us ask the grace of being *witnesses of life* in this world that thirsts for it so much, witnesses who inspire and revive the hope of God in weary hearts burdened with sadness. Our proclamation is the joy of the living Lord, Who continues to say today, as to Ezekiel, "Behold, I will open your graves and raise you from your graves, O my people" (Ez. 37:12).