



SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE **BOLLETTINO**

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Apostolic Trip of the Holy Father Francis in Colombia (6-11 September 2017) – Blessing of the first stone of houses for the homeless and the Opera Talitha Kum

Blessing of the first stone of houses for the homeless and the Opera Talitha Kum

This morning, after leaving the apostolic nunziature of Bogotá, the Holy Father Francis transferred by popemobile to the CATAM military air base.

Upon arrival the Pope greeted various people from the Avianca air company near the steps to the aircraft, before departing for “Rafael Nuñez” Airport in Cartagena. The Holy Father was welcomed upon arrival by the metropolitan archbishop of Cartagena, H.E. Msgr. Jorge Enrique Jiménez Carvajal, C.I.M., the governor, the mayor of the city and the military authorities. Before heading for Plaza San Francisco de Asís, the Pope passed in front of the hangar where around three hundred young people performed a dance on the theme of the dignity of the person and cultural identity.

At 10.25 the Holy Father arrived in Plaza San Francisco de Asís in Cartagena, where he blessed the first stone of the houses for the homeless and for the Opera Talitha Kum. Several hundred people were present in the square, homeless people and young girls assisted by the Opera.

After the welcome address from the parish priest of San Francisco de Asís, Fr. Elkin Acevedo, and the Pope’s blessing of the first stones of the structure, the Holy Father visited the home of Lorenza, a woman aged 77 who for fifty years has offered in her house food and shelter to those in need. He then transferred by car to the church of Saint Peter Claver.

The following is the text of the prayer that the Holy Father read during the ceremony for the blessing of the first stone of the house:

Let us pray.

Blessed are you, O Lord, the God of mercy,
Who in your Son You have given us
an admirable example of charity

and through Him you have strongly recommended to us
the commandment to love;
fill with your blessings
these servants of yours,
who wish to devote themselves generously
to the help of their brothers;
so that, in urgent needs,
they may serve you faithfully and fully
in the person of their neighbour.
