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Pope Francis to be awarded Charlemagne Prize on Friday 6 May

Vatican City, 3 May 2016 – Pope Francis will receive the International Charlemagne Prize this coming Friday, 6 May, in Vatican City. The prize is awarded for work done in the service of European unification and is named after Charlemagne, the King of the Franks, who was revered by his contemporaries as the “Father of Europe”.

The award ceremony will take place at the Vatican on 6 May at 12:00. It will be introduced by “laudatio” speeches by European Parliament President Martin Schulz (the laureate of the award for 2015), Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker and Council President Donald Tusk, whom the Pope will receive in private audience at 10.30 a.m. on the same day. Marcel Phipp, mayor of Aachen, Germany, will give a welcome address followed by the reading of the Charlemagne Award decision by Dr Jürgen Linden of the Charlemagne Foundation; the two will then present the Prize to the Holy Father. There will then be speeches by the presidents Schulz, Juncker and Tusk, and the ceremony will conclude with an address by the Holy Father.

The announcement of the prizewinner was made on December 23 in Aachen by the prize's executive committee. Citing his address to the European Parliament in 2014, the prize committee commended the Pope's message of "peace and understanding" as well as "compassion, tolerance, solidarity and the integrity of creation throughout his pontificate." "In these times, in which many citizens in Europe seek orientation, His Holiness Pope Francis sends a message of love and encouragement," it said in a statement.