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The Pope canonises Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary, and Mary Elisabeth Hesselblad

Vatican City, 5 June 2016 – This morning, during the Mass celebrated in St. Peter's Square, the Holy Father canonised the Blesseds Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary Papczyński (1631-1701), Polish Piarist priest and founder of the Society of Marian Clerics of the Immaculate Conception, and Maria Elisabeth Hesselblad (1870-1957), Swedish religious and founder of the Bridgettine Sisters. Both of them, the Holy Father remarked, remained "intimately united with the Passion of Jesus, and the power of His resurrection was made manifest in them".

"In Christ's Passion, there is God's response to the anguished and at times indignant cry that the experience of pain and death provokes in us", he said in his homily. "It is about not escaping from the Cross, but remaining there, like the Virgin Mary, who by suffering alongside Jesus received the grace of hoping against all hope." The first reading and the Gospel of this Sunday offer us two prodigious signs of resurrection.

In the first, the widow of Zarephath – a woman who was not a Jew, but had welcomed in her house the prophet Elijah – is indignant with the prophet and with God because while Elijah was her guest, her son sickened and died in her arms. Elijah said to the woman, "Give me your son". "This is a key word", the Pope explained. "It expresses the attitude of God when faced with our death, in all its forms; He does not say, 'Keep it, sort it out for yourself'. Instead, He says, 'Give it to me'. And indeed the prophet takes the child and carries him to the upper room, and there, by himself, in prayer 'battles with God', pointing out to him the absurdity of that death. The Lord heard the voice of Elijah, for it was in fact He, God, Who spoke and acted in the person of the prophet. It was God Who, speaking through Elijah, told the woman: 'Give me your son'. And now it was God Who gave the child back alive to his mother."

God's tenderness is fully revealed in Jesus. "We heard in the Gospel of the 'great compassion' which Jesus felt for the widow of Nain in Galilee, who was accompanying her only son, a mere adolescent, to his burial. Jesus draws close, touches the bier, stops the funeral procession, and must have caressed that poor mother's face bathed in tears. 'Do not weep', He says to her, as if to say: 'Give me your son'. Jesus asks to take our death upon Himself, to free us from it and to restore our life. The young man then awoke as if from a deep sleep and began to speak. Jesus 'gave him to his mother'. Jesus is not a wizard. It is God's tenderness incarnate; the Father's immense compassion is at work in Jesus."

"And so it is with each and every sinner", emphasised the Holy Father, at the end of his homily. "Jesus

constantly makes the victory of life-giving grace shine forth. He says to Mother Church: 'Give me your children', which means all of us. He takes our sins upon Himself, takes them away and gives us back alive to the Mother Church. All this happens in a special way during this Holy Year of Mercy."

Following the Angelus prayer, at the end of the Eucharistic celebration, the Pope greeted the delegations from the countries of origin of the new saints: Poland, led by the president of the Republic, and Sweden. He implored Our Lady to guide us always along the path of holiness and to sustain us in the day to day construction of justice and peace.
