United in prayer in remembrance of Pope Francis: the Grand Master's words

The Cardinal Grand Master, the authorities of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem and all Knights and Dames throughout the world are united in prayer for the repose of Pope Francis' soul. .

"The news of Pope Francis' death came as a surprise to us, especially since we had seen him during the *Urbi et Orbi* blessing on Easter Sunday at midday and then among the faithful gathered at St Peter's after Mass as he made his way around the square in the Pope mobile. He showed signs of his illness, with his voice and face suffering, yet nothing suggested that the end would be so imminent," commented Grand Master, Cardinal Fernando Filoni. "An end, however, that falls on the day of the liturgical anniversary known as the 'Monday of the Angel' [Easter Monday], where we seem to hear again the words addressed to the women and Disciples at the empty Tomb as they were breathlessly looking for Jesus' body, 'Why do you seek the living one among the dead?'

The Angel's words now seem to be addressed to us in the present circumstances as well. For we know that the memory of Pope Francis, of his faith and his Pontificate, of what he said and did, survives the sad event of his sudden death.

We entrust to the Risen Lord in the light of faith," the Grand Master concluded, "the person and work of Pope Francis, and we pray that the Holy Spirit will at this time accompany the Church in its mission. The last *Urbi et Orbi* message of Easter morning now appears to us as the last prophetic cry that Pope Francis has launched to the Church and to the whole world for peace and harmony among peoples."

We invoke the Virgin Mary Queen of Palestine, our Patroness, who invites us to look beyond death and we entrust her to obtain for the Holy Father the gift of peace in the Risen Christ.

May the example of Pope Francis continue to inspire us.