

Pool Report: Philadelphia Arrival of Pope Francis
Saturday, September 26, 2015

Buses dropped off tired journalists and media staff at the Philadelphia International Airport between 5:30 and 5:45 a.m. It was still dark and cold as everyone was taken into a large white tent, set up with round tables covered in red cloth. Coffee and breakfast platters were available. Around 6:00 am, dozens of students from Shanahan High School streamed into the tent, sporting green band uniforms with white feathered hats. Screens around the tent showed countdowns until the Pope's arrival in Philly.

The morning continued cool with the sun struggling to break through the clouds. Reporters and journalists set up their gear on one of two risers on the Tarmac, that were each two levels tall. The band and their families were sectioned off to the left, as the stairs for the pope's plane and a red carpet awaited his scheduled 9:30 a.m. arrival. A young boy in a wheelchair who has Cerebral Palsy was near the front of the fenced off area, flanked by two Vatican flags. A Fox reporter doing a live broadcast remarked on his positioning, telling listeners that he would bet that the Pope would get out to bless the boy.

As the plane landed and taxied toward the crowd, four men unrolled the red carpet. The band played Journey's "Don't Stop Believing" by Journey and "Gonna Fly Now," which is the main musical theme for the film "Rocky," as the Pope descended the long stairs. Local dignitaries including Cardinal Charles J. Chaput, Archbishop of Philadelphia, greeted the Pope along the red carpet. U.S. Secret Service personnel hurriedly pulled the vehicles to the front of the red carpet. The vehicles appeared to be departing when the Pope's Fiat circled back to the left in the fenced off section to get out and embrace the young boy in the wheelchair. As the Pope climbed back into his car, the motorcade departed and the Pope waved from his window to the crowd.

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