

Papal Visit 2015

Pool report – Mass at Basilica of Sts. Peter and Paul, Philadelphia

September 26, 2015

Times are EDT

The Basilica doors were opened to reporters/media at 7:15 am to a small crowd already gathering at the street barricades in order to see and wave/greet the pope when he arrives in his Fiat for the 10:30am Mass.

It was a cool morning of 60 degrees with clouds and a light breeze.

Religious Sisters (nuns), individuals, families began entering the Cathedral at 8:15 am. The choir rehearsed and began a pre-mass music program at approximately 8:30.

Over 100 sisters from various religious orders found their seats and expressed how thrilled they were to be present to share the Holy Mass with the Holy Father. They took their seats on the left and right sides of the Cathedral. Sister Sonia Avi Immaculate of the Heart of Mary Order read the First Reading during the Mass.

From 9:25 am - 9:37 am, Clergy (priests and deacons) began processing in down the center aisle of his 1600-seat cathedral. They wore cream colored and white vestments.

The Rector of Church, Father Dennis Gill, greeted everyone at 9:40 am and welcomed them to Philadelphia for the World Meeting of Families. He welcomed Pope Francis to the city. He then had everyone stand and pray the "Our Father" prayer for Pope Francis.

Afterward, he gave further instruction about how the mass will begin (Pope Francis down center aisle) and end (Pope Francis not to process down center aisle but to the left to the sacristy) and that all should wait until told by ushers to leave the basilica.

10:15 Pope Francis arrives. At the Cathedral main doorway, he stops and kisses the Crucifix. He then sprinkles/ blesses all present with holy water. He proceeds down the center aisle to cheers of the crowd.

10:25 Mass officially begins with the procession including Pope Francis as the principal celebrant. He wore cream vestment with green trim.

10:54. Pope Francis delivers his homily.

Before exiting in the final procession, Pope Francis stopped and greeted/had conversation with two disabled children and their families. He spent approximately 3 minutes with each and ended with blessing them and their parents.

12:05pm. Mass is finished.

12:10. People left the Basilica in an orderly fashion and entered the large crowd still in front of the main doorway outside. The sun was shining brightly as people stepped over to the "Our Lady Undoer of Knots" art exhibit.

###

Submitted by Paula Gwynn Grant