

Pool Report: Mass for the Conclusion of the World Meeting of Families
September 27, 2015

The afternoon was overcast but a very comfortable 70 degrees.

Crowds lined the streets hours before the Mass hoping to catch a glimpse of the Pope as he drove in.

There was a baby named Margaret at the barricade, brought there by her aunt. She was held at the barricade in the hopes that Pope Francis would stop his motorcade to kiss her. Margaret was 2.5 months old.

Also at the barricade was 12-year old Brett Haubrich, from the Archdiocese of St. Louis, who is suffering from brain cancer. Brett's "wish" from the Make-A-Wish foundation was to be a priest for a day, which was fulfilled last spring in St. Louis. He was invited to the closing Mass in Philadelphia by Archbishop Charles Chaput. U.S. Secret Service personnel brought him outside the barricade in the hopes that Pope Francis would stop to meet him.

At around 3:15 p.m. the Pope got into his Popemobile and began to drive the perimeter of the Parkway.

When the Pope passed by, the crowd shouted "Bambino!" hoping he would stop the motorcade to kiss Margaret. The shouting got the attention of Pope Francis and he lifted his arm and made a cross in the air, to bless the baby.

At about 3:45 p.m. the Pope completed his circuit.

The altar was below an arched dome, the front of which read: World Meeting of Families-Philadelphia 2015, with the event's logo on it. There was a large gold crucifix above the chair of the Pope. It was affixed to a white panel with a gold cross with blue border framing the crucifix.

At the base of the panel were yellow flowers.

The papal chair was tan, backed with a white and gold panel. On either side were two smaller white chairs.

The altar was white and gold. The front of the altar had a chi-ro in gold. This is symbol that is the combination of the two greek letters, chi and ro, which are the first two letters of "Christ" in Greek. There were 3 golden candlesticks on either side of the altar and a golden crucifix in the center.

Behind the altar, on the steps of the art museum was the sister sculpture of the "LOVE" statue in Philadelphia. This sculpture read "AMOR," which is "love" in Spanish, and is on loan for the occasion of this Papal Visit.

A large rendering of the Holy Family, used at WMOF, was on a stand behind the bishops facing the congregation, on the right side (when looking at the altar).

Before Mass began there was an announcement to refrain from waving flags and clapping during the duration of the Mass.

The Mass began promptly at 4:00 p.m. with the entrance chant "Exultate, Justi."

Many cardinals and bishops sat on the altar, on either side, facing the altar in the center. They, along with the Pope, were vested in green.

Additional priests and bishops who were concelebrating were sitting outside the dome over the altar on risers.

The Pope walked to the altar at 4:05 p.m.

The Pope began the Mass in English.

The first reading from the Book of Numbers was proclaimed by a man in Spanish.

At 4:14 p.m. a male cantor began to lead the chant of the responsorial psalm.

The second reading from the book of James was proclaimed by a woman in Vietnamese.

At 4:18 p.m. the congregation was led by a woman cantor in the alleluia while the Pope blessed the Deacon who was to proclaim the Gospel.

The Deacon chanted in Latin the Gospel introduction dialogue and then incensed the ambo with the book of the Gospels on it. He chanted the Gospel in English.

At 4:26 p.m. the pope moved to the ambo to deliver his homily in Spanish.

Captions for the homily were provided on the large screens in English. There were also two people on the large screens interpreting the Mass into American Sign Language.

The Pope delivered his homily with much inflection, varying his speed, volume and tone throughout.

After the homily was over, the crowd applauded.

An announcement was then made asking the crowd to observe silence after the homily in order to meditate on the mysteries in the Word of God.

At 4:44 p.m. the congregation was led in the chant of the Creed in Latin. The chant was introduced by a male cantor, and then a female cantor led the remainder.

The song for the Preparation of the Gifts was "Sound the Bell of Holy Freedom" by Andrew D. Ciferni, O. Praem. The introduction of the song was primarily led by the brass and procession sections of the orchestra leading the music for the Mass. As the brass swelled, the string section created a softer sound and the choir sang as the cantor invited the congregation to join in the hymn.

The gifts were brought up by families of various cultural backgrounds including African, Hispanic and Vietnamese. Each of the families included children of various ages. Some included grandparents.

At 4:58 p.m. some of the concelebrants began leaving their platforms. After the consecration, they were led, each with a lay person or religious to distribute communion. Those accompanying the Ministers of the Eucharist carried yellow and white umbrellas that were opened and held up, marking the location of the distribution. Many of the escorts wore white and gold sashes with a Knights of Columbus logo.

The Pope incensed the gifts and then handed the thurible to the deacon who incensed the congregation.

The Pope said the prayer over the offering in English, but the Eucharistic prayer was led in Latin.

As the Sanctus was chanted, 7 altar servers with candles processed out from behind the left side of the altar, each holding a candle stick. They stopped on the final step to the altar, and at the conclusion of the Sanctus kneeled.

The altar server in the middle held the thurible instead of a candle and incensed the host and chalice as they were lifted up during the consecration. A bell rang twice when the host and chalice were lifted.

Distribution of communion began at 5:15 p.m.

At 5:34 p.m., communion ended and Archbishop Charles J. Chaput of Philadelphia gave remarks of thanks. After the remarks, the crowd began to clap, but very few cheers.

Archbishop Vincenzo Paglia, president of the Pontifical Council for the Family next delivered remarks and announced that the next World Meeting of Families will be held in 2018 in Dublin, Ireland. Dublin Archbishop Diarmuid Martin joined Archbishop Paglia on the altar for that announcement.

The Archbishop continued, announcing that five families from five continents would receive 100,000 copies of the Gospel of Luke to distribute to the poor of their cities. The five families came to the altar to receive a copy of Luke's Gospels. One additional family came from Syria. When they return to their homes, they will have the copies of the gospel to hand out. In addition, they will bring back the money from the collection from the Mass to buy heating oil during the coming five months of winter.

The final blessing was at 5:52 p.m

The Pope said, "God bless you all. Thank you very much for your participation."

The closing song began at 5:53 p.m. and the bishops began to process out.

After the Pope left the altar, the crowd cheered.

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