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Pilgrimage of the Holy Father Francis to the “Shrine of Our Lady of Fátima” – Welcome ceremony at the Monte Real Air Base, private meeting with the President of the Republic of Portugal and Visit to the Air Base Chapel

Welcome ceremony at the Monte Real Air Base and private meeting with the President of the Republic of Portugal

Visit to the Chapel of the Monte Real Air Base

Welcome ceremony at the Monte Real Air Base and private meeting with the President of the Republic of Portugal

The aircraft carrying the Holy Father Francis left Rome at 14.00 this afternoon, and landed at 16.10 (local time) at the Monte Real Air Base.

Upon arrival, the Holy Father was welcomed by the President of the Republic of Portugal, Marcelo Nuno Duarte Rebelo de Sousa. Political and civil leaders, several Portuguese bishops and a group of around one thousand faithful were also present. After the performance of the national anthems and the presentation of military honours, the presentation of the respective delegations took place. The President of the Republic accompanied the Pope to a room in the building of the Air Base control tower where, at 16.35, the private meeting took place.

At the end of the meeting, gifts were exchanged. President Marcelo Nuno Duarte Rebelo de Sousa then presented to Pope Francis the President of the Parliament and the Prime Minister with their respective wives. The Holy Father then transferred by car to the Air Base chapel where he was awaited by a group of military personnel with health problems, with their families.

Visit to the Chapel of the Monte Real Air Base

At 16.55 this afternoon, the Holy Father Francis visited the Chapel of the Monte Real Air Base, accompanied by the Military Ordinary for Portugal.

Upon arrival he was welcomed by the two chaplains. Then, after receiving a floral tribute from two children in traditional costume, the Pope paused in silent adoration of the Most Holy Eucharist.

After presenting a gift and signing the Book of Honour, Pope Francis left the Monte Real Air Base by helicopter, destined for the Stadium of Fátima.

The following is the text of the Pope's inscription in the Book of Honour:

Inscription in the Book of Honour

"I entrust the personnel of the Air Base and their families to Our Lady of Fátima, and pray that she watch over their safety and keep them as faithful servants of the common good and of peace".

[Francis]
