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Apostolic Trip of Pope Francis to the United Arab Emirates (3 to 5 February 2019) – the Pope's Words on the flight from Rome to Abu Dhabi

Yesterday afternoon, on the aircraft carrying him to the United Arab Emirates, the Holy Father Francis gave his usual greeting to the media operators accompanying him on the papal flight.

Introduced by the *ad interim* director of the Holy See Press Office, Alessandro Gisotti, the Pope addressed some words to the journalists. The following is the full text:

Words of the Holy Father

Pope Francis:

Good afternoon to you all, and a good Sunday!

Alessandro Gisotti:

Good afternoon, Holy Father, good afternoon to you all. Welcome on board to the colleagues from Abu Dhabi for the Emirates – Salam aleikum. Holy Father, it seems like yesterday – it was almost yesterday – that we were on the return flight from Panama. Among the many banners of welcome there, one in particular, of the Muslim community of Panama, said: “Bienvenido Papa Francisco, hombre de paz”. And it is with precisely this spirit, I think, they await you in the Emirates, as a man of peace who goes in order to strengthen the dialogue of peace, the dialogue of brotherhood, human fraternity. Over to you, Holy Father.

Pope Francis:

Thank you for your company. It will be a short trip, brief. Today, this morning, I received the news that was raining in Abu Dhabi: this, in that place, one may consider as a sign of blessing. Let us hope it goes thus. Many thanks. I have brought copies of the icon made in the Bose Monastery, so that you can take it home: it is on the theme of dialogue between the elderly and the young [the icon depicts a young monk carrying an elderly monk on his shoulders]. This is very close to my heart, and I believe it is a challenge for our time. Paolo Ruffini will give you this icon. Thank you.