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Apostolic Journey of the Holy Father Francis in Budapest for the concluding Holy Mass of the 52nd International Eucharistic Congress, and in Slovakia (12-15 September 2021) – The Pope's words on the flight from Rome to Budapest

On the aircraft that carried the Holy Father Francis to Budapest and Slovakia this morning, for his 34th International Apostolic Journey, the Holy Father Francis gave his customary greeting to the media operators accompanying him on the papal flight.

Introduced by the greeting of the Director of the Holy See Press Office, Matteo Bruni, the Pope addressed the following words to the journalists:

Words of the Holy Father

Bruni

Good morning, everyone. Good morning Holy Father.

Pope Francis

Good morning, everyone.

Bruni

I think I share everyone's thoughts in saying that we are happy and grateful to see you. There are seventy-eight journalists and media workers present, eight of us from the countries where we are going, five from Hungary and three from Slovakia. Thank you, Holy Father, for this greeting and for the words you will address to us.

Pope Francis

Good morning to you. Thank you for the company. This flight has something of a farewell feel to it, because the Master of Ceremonies is leaving us: it is his last journey, because he has become a bishop. Then we are left with “the dictator on duty” [he turns and smiles at Bishop Datonou]. He is good... he too has been appointed bishop and leaves his role to a Monsignor, George is his name, from India [Msgr. George Jacob Koovakad]: he always smiles, always. He will be “a dictator with a smile”! Alitalia is leaving us... So many leaves, but we are resuming our travels and this is a very important thing, because we are going to bring the word and greetings to so many people.

Thank you for coming, thank you Msgr. Dieudonné, thank you Msgr. George, the “smiling dictator”. Thank you, Msgr. Marini, thank you all, and thank you Alitalia, for bringing us this far. Again today, the senior journalist Valentina [Alazrakij] is not here, but there is [Philip] Pullella, I think: there he is, I can see the landing strip [he points to Pullella’s head].

We go forward, always remembering those who are not on the flight because they are our companions. Now I'm going to come by and say hello, in a bit of a hurry because the schedule is tight. Thank you.
