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Saturday 23.11.2019

Apostolic Trip of His Holiness Francis to Thailand and Japan (19 to 26 November 2019) – Farewell Ceremony in Thailand, telegrams to Heads of State during the flight from Bangkok to Rome, and Welcome Ceremony at Tokyo Airport

Farewell Ceremony in Thailand at Bangkok Airport

Telegram to the King of Thailand

Telegrams to Heads of State during the flight from Bangkok to Rome

Welcome Ceremony at Tokyo-Haneda Airport

Farewell Ceremony in Thailand at Bangkok Airport

This morning, after celebrating Mass in private, at 8:20 local time (2:20 in Rome), the Holy Father Francis bade farewell to the staff of the apostolic nunciature and the benefactors, and transferred by car to Bangkok's Military Air Terminal 2 for the farewell ceremony from Thailand.

Upon arrival, at 9:15 local time (15:15 Rome time), the Pope was welcomed by a member of the Privy Council and, together, before crossing the Guard of Honour, they greeted eleven Thai children, the bishops, the local entourage and some members of the Thai authorities. Then the Holy Father, after receiving a floral tribute from the deputy prime minister of Thailand, boarded a *Thai Airways International* A330 bound for Tokyo.

The aircraft carrying the Holy Father departed from Bangkok Airport at 9:54 local time (3:54 in Rome), and landed at Tokyo-Haneda Airport at 17:25 local time (9:25 in Rome).

Telegram to the King of Thailand

Immediately after his departure by air from Bangkok, the Holy Father Francis sent to His Majesty the King of Thailand, Maha Vajiralongkorn Rama X, the following telegraphic message:

HIS MAJESTY MAHA VAJIRALONGKORN RAMA X
KING OF THAILAND
BANGKOK

AS I LEAVE THAILAND TO CONTINUE MY APOSTOLIC JOURNEY TO JAPAN, I RENEW MY DEEP APPRECIATION TO YOUR MAJESTY, THE ROYAL FAMILY AND THE BELOVED PEOPLE OF THAILAND FOR YOUR WARM WELCOME AND GENEROUS HOSPITALITY. INVOKING ABUNDANT DIVINE BLESSINGS UPON ALL OF YOU, I OFFER THE ASSURANCE OF MY PRAYERS FOR PEACE AND HARMONY IN THE NATION.

FRANCISCUS PP.

Telegrams to Heads of State during the flight from Bangkok to Rome

During the flight from Bangkok to Tokyo, while flying over Laos, Vietnam, China, Hong Kong and Taiwan, the Pope sent the following telegraphic messages to the respective Heads of State:

Overflight Laos

HIS EXCELLENCY BOUNNHANG VORACHITH

PRESIDENT OF THE LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC

VIENTIANE

I EXTEND CORDIAL GREETINGS TO YOUR EXCELLENCY AND YOUR FELLOW CITIZENS, AS I ENTER LAOTIAN AIR SPACE. PRAYING THAT YOUR NATION MAY BE BLESSED WITH PEACE AND WELL-BEING, I INVOKE DIVINE BLESSINGS UPON ALL.

FRANCISCUS PP.

Overflight Vietnam

HIS EXCELLENCY Nguyễn Phú Trọng

PRESIDENT OF THE SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM

HANOI

AS I FLY OVER VIETNAM ON MY WAY TO JAPAN, I EXTEND TO YOUR EXCELLENCY AND YOUR FELLOW CITIZENS MY BEST WISHES. INVOKING DIVINE BLESSINGS UPON YOU ALL, I PRAY THAT PEACE AND WELL-BEING MAY FLOURISH IN THE NATION.

FRANCISCUS PP.

Overflight Cina

HIS EXCELLENCY xI jINPING

PRESIDENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC of cHINA

BEIJING

I SEND CORDIAL GREETINGS TO YOUR EXCELLENCY AS I FLY OVER CHINA ON MY WAY TO JAPAN. I ASSURE YOU OF MY PRAYERS FOR THE NATION AND ITS PEOPLE, INVOKING UPON ALL OF YOU ABUNDANT BLESSINGS OF PEACE AND JOY.

FRANCISCUS PP.

Overflight Hong Kong

HER EXCELLENCY CARRIE LAM

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF HONG KONG SPECIAL

ADMINISTRATIVE REGION

AS I FLY OVER YOUR TERRITORY, I EXTEND MY BEST WISHES TO YOUR EXCELLENCY AND YOUR FELLOW CITIZENS. INVOKING DIVINE BLESSINGS, I PRAY THAT ALMIGHTY GOD MAY GRANT YOU ALL WELL-BEING AND PEACE.

FRANCISCUS PP.

Overflight Taiwan

HER EXCELLENCY Tsai Ing-wen

PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF CHINA (TAIWAN)

TAIPEI

AS I ENTER THE AIRSPACE OF TAIWAN ON MY WAY TO JAPAN, I SEND CORDIAL GREETINGS TO YOUR EXCELLENCY AND YOUR FELLOW CITIZENS. ASSURING YOU OF MY PRAYERS FOR ALL THE PEOPLE OF TAIWAN, I INVOKE ABUNDANT DIVINE BLESSINGS OF PEACE.

FRANCISCUS PP.

Welcome Ceremony at Tokyo-Haneda Airport

Upon arrival at Tokyo-Haneda Airport, the Holy Father Francis was received at the foot of the steps to the aircraft by the deputy prime minister of Japan, His Excellency Tarō Asō. Two children in traditional costume offered him a floral tribute, in the presence of around one hundred students from Catholic schools. Then, after

greeting the respective delegations and passing through the Guard of Honour, the Pope and the deputy prime minister had a brief private meeting in the VIP 3 Hall of the airport.

The Holy Father then transferred by car to the apostolic nunciature of Tokyo, where upon arrival he was received in the courtyard by a group of two hundred faithful, and at the entrance to the house by the staff of the nunciature.