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Apostolic Trip of His Holiness Francis in Ireland for the World Meeting of Families in Dublin (25-26 August 2018) – Visit to the Chapel of the Shrine of Knock and recital of the Angelus

Before the Angelus

After the Angelus

Visit to the Chapel of the Shrine of Knock and recital of the Angelus

This morning, after leaving the apostolic nunciature, at 8.10 local time (9.10 in Rome) the Holy Father Francis transferred to Dublin International Airport to visit the Chapel of the Shrine of Knock, situated on the plateau of the Irish country of Mayo.

Upon arrival at Knock heliport, the Pope was received by the archbishop of Tuam, H.E. Msgr. Michael Neary, and by the four bishops of the Ecclesiastic Province. Some children were also present. The Holy Father immediately transferred to the shrine, the location of Marian pilgrimages in Ireland. After a tour among the faithful by popemobile, the Holy Father went to the Chapel of the Apparitions where he was received by the rector of the Shrine, Father Richard Gibbons. Around two hundred faithful were gathered in the Chapel.

After silent prayer before the image of Our Lady, the Holy Father left a gold rosary as a tribute to the Virgin. He then transferred to the forecourt of the Shrine for the recital of the Angelus.

Pope Francis then left by air for Dublin, where he lunched with the papal entourage at the nunciature.

The following are the Pope's words of introduction to the Marian prayer:

Before the Angelus

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I am happy to be here with you. I am happy to be with you in the house of Our Lady. And I thank God for this opportunity, in the context of the World Meeting of Families, to visit this Shrine, so dear to the Irish people. I thank Archbishop Neary and the Rector, Father Gibbons, for their warm welcome.

In the Apparition Chapel, I lifted up to Our Lady's loving intercession all the families of the world, and, in a special way, your families, the families of Ireland. Mary our Mother knows the joys and struggles felt in each home. Holding them in her Immaculate Heart, she brings them with love to the throne of her Son.

As a remembrance of my visit, I have presented the Shrine with a rosary. I know how important the tradition of the family rosary has been in this country. I warmly encourage you to continue this tradition. Who can tell how many hearts, of fathers, mothers and children alike, have drawn comfort and strength over the years from meditating on Our Lady's participation in the joyful, luminous, sorrowful and glorious mysteries of Christ's life!

Mary is Mother. Mary is our Mother and the Mother of the Church, and it is to her that we commend today the journey of God's faithful people on this emerald isle. We ask that our families be sustained in their efforts to advance Christ's Kingdom and to care for the least of our brothers and sisters. Amid the storms and winds that buffet our times, may families be a bulwark of faith and goodness, resisting, in the best traditions of this nation, all that would diminish our dignity as men and women created in God's image and called to the sublime destiny of eternal life.

May Our Lady also look with mercy on all the suffering members of her Son's family. In my prayer before her statue, I presented to her in particular all the survivors of abuse committed by members of the Church in Ireland. None of us can fail to be moved by the stories of young people who suffered abuse, were robbed of their innocence, were separated from their mothers, and were left scarred by painful memories. This open wound challenges us to be firm and decisive in the pursuit of truth and justice. I beg the Lord's forgiveness for these sins and for the scandal and betrayal felt by so many others in God's family. I ask our Blessed Mother to intercede for all the survivors of abuse of any kind and to confirm every member of our Christian family in the resolve never again to permit these situations to occur. And to intercede for all of us, so that we can proceed always with justice and remedy, to the extent it depends on us, such violence.

My pilgrimage to Knock also allows me to address a warm greeting to the beloved people of Northern Ireland. Although my Journey for the World Meeting of Families does not include a visit to the North, I assure you of my affection and my closeness in prayer. I ask Our Lady to sustain all the members of the Irish family to persevere, as brothers and sisters, in the work of reconciliation. With gratitude for advance of ecumenism, and the significant growth of friendship and cooperation between the Christian communities, I pray that all Christ's followers will support the continuing efforts to advance the peace process and to build a harmonious and just society for today's children, be they Christians, Muslims, Jews, or of any faith: the children of Ireland.

Now, with these intentions, and all the intentions hidden in our hearts, let us turn to the Blessed Virgin Mary in the prayer of the Angelus.

After the Angelus

I offer a special greeting to the men and women in this country who are in prison. I especially thank those who wrote to me upon learning that I would visit Ireland. I would like to say to you: I am close to you, very close. I assure you and your families of my closeness in prayer. May Our Lady of Mercy watch over you and protect you, and strengthen you in faith and hope! Thank you!
