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Apostolic Trip of Pope Francis to Bulgaria and North Macedonia (5 to 7 May 2019) – Private visit to the “Vrazhdebna” Refugee Centre

Private visit to the “Vrazhdebna” Refugee Centre

This morning, after leaving the apostolic nunciature, the Holy Father Francis transferred by car to the “Vrazhdebna” Refugee Centre in the outskirts of Sofia.

Upon arrival, at 8.25 (7.25 in Rome), the Pope was received by the director of the Centre and by the director of Caritas at the main entrance of the structure. He then proceeded to the refectory, where he was awaited by around fifty people – parents and children. The children present in the Centre originate from Syria and Iraq.

After brief greetings from a volunteer, a song performed by the children and the presentation of the gift of some of the children’s drawings to the Pope, the Holy Father greeted the families gathered in the Centre and addressed some words to them. He then imparted his blessing and took leave of them, transferring by car to Sofia International Airport to depart for Plovdiv.

The following are the words pronounced by the Holy Father during the encounter at the “Vrazhdebna” Refugee Centre:

Words of the Holy Father

Thank you very much for your welcome. Thank you to the children, for their very beautiful song. They bring joy on your path. Your path is not always easy, and then there is the sadness of leaving your homeland and seeking to adapt to another country. Yet there is always hope. Today, the world of migrants and refugees is something of a cross, a cross for humanity, and a cross that so many people suffer from. I thank you for your goodwill, and I wish all the best for you and your fellow citizens whom you have left behind in your homeland. May God bless you, and please pray for me.