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BUREAU DE PRESSE DU SAINT-SIEGE
PRESSEAMT DES HEILIGEN STUHLS

BOLLETTINO

SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE

N. 210305a

Friday 05.03.2021

Apostolic Journey of His Holiness Francis in Iraq (5 to 8 March 2021) - Departure from Rome, Telegram to the President of the Italian Republic and Telegrams to Heads of State

Departure from Rome

This morning Pope Francis began his 33rd international Apostolic Journey, this time in Iraq.

As he left Casa Santa Marta, shortly before 7.00 this morning, the Holy Father paused for a few moments with around twelve people received by the Sant'Egidio Community and the Auxilium Cooperative, who have sought refuge from Iraq in recent years. The group was accompanied by the Papal Almoner, His Eminence Cardinal Konrad Krajewski. Pope Francis then transferred by car to Rome-Fiumicino, where he departed at 7.35 on board an Alitalia A330 bound for Baghdad.

The aircraft landed at Baghdad International Airport at 13.55 local time (11.55 in Rome).

Telegram to the President of the Italian Republic

At the moment of leaving Italian territory, the Holy Father Francis sent the following telegram to the President of the Italian Republic, Hon. Sergio Mattarella:

HIS EXCELLENCY HON. SERGIO MATTARELLA

PRESIDENT OF THE ITALIAN REPUBLIC

PALAZZO DEL QUIRINALE 00187 ROME

AS I LEAVE ROME FOR IRAQ, WHERE I GO AS A PILGRIM OF PEACE AND FRATERNITY AMONG PEOPLES, IT IS MY PLEASURE TO ADDRESS TO YOU, MR. PRESIDENT, MY RESPECTFUL GREETING,

WHICH I ACCOMPANY WITH FERVENT PRAYERS FOR SERENITY AND PROSPERITY FOR THE DEAR ITALIAN PEOPLE.

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

During the flight to Baghdad, in flying over Greece, Cyprus, Palestine, Israel, and finally Jordan, the Holy Father Francis sent the following telegrams to the respective Heads of State:

Overflight Greece

HER EXCELLENCY KATERINA SAKELLAROPOULOU

PRESIDENT OF THE HELLENIC REPUBLIC

ATHENS

AS MY APOSTOLIC JOURNEY TO IRAQ TAKES ME OVER GREEK AIRSPACE, I SEND WARM GREETINGS TO YOUR EXCELLENCY AND PRAY THAT GOD ALMIGHTY WILL BESTOW UPON YOU AND YOUR FELLOW CITIZENS HIS BLESSINGS OF UNITY, PEACE AND PROSPERITY.

FRANCISCUS PP.

Overflight Cyprus

HIS EXCELLENCY NICOS ANASTASIADES

PRESIDENT OF CYPRUS

NICOSIA

ENTERING CYPRIOT AIRSPACE ON MY APOSTOLIC JOURNEY TO IRAQ, I EXTEND CORDIAL GREETINGS TO YOUR EXCELLENCY AND THE PEOPLE OF CYPRUS, WITH FERVENT PRAYERS THAT GOD WILL BLESS YOU ALL WITH HARMONY AND PEACE.

FRANCISCUS PP.

Overflight Palestine

HIS EXCELLENCY MAHMOUD ABBAS

PRESIDENT OF THE STATE OF PALESTINE

AS I FLY OVER PALESTINIAN TERRITORY ON MY APOSTOLIC JOURNEY TO IRAQ, I EXTEND CORDIAL GREETINGS TO YOUR EXCELLENCY AND YOUR FELLOW CITIZENS, AND I PRAY THAT THE MOST HIGH GOD WILL BLESS ALL PALESTINIANS WITH PEACE AND WELL-BEING.

FRANCISCUS PP.

Overflight Israel

HIS EXCELLENCY REUVEN RIVLIN

PRESIDENT OF THE STATE OF ISRAEL

ENTERING ISRAELI AIRSPACE ON MY APOSTOLIC JOURNEY TO IRAQ, I SEND WARM GREETINGS TO YOU AND THE PEOPLE OF THE NATION, PRAYING THAT ALMIGHTY GOD WILL BLESS ALL WITH HIS GIFTS OF HARMONY AND PEACE.

FRANCISCUS PP.

Overflight Jordan

HIS MAJESTY ABDULLAH II

KING OF JORDAN

AMMAN

I OFFER CORDIAL GREETINGS TO YOUR MAJESTY, THE MEMBERS OF THE ROYAL FAMILY AND THE PEOPLE OF JORDAN AS I FLY OVER JORDANIAN AIRSPACE ON MY APOSTOLIC JOURNEY TO IRAQ. UPON THE ENTIRE NATION, I INVOKE THE ABUNDANT BLESSINGS OF THE MOST HIGH.

FRANCISCUS PP.
