

Argentinean president meets with Pope Francis at the Vatican

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The agenda of the visit to the Vatican included a 30-minute meeting between Pope Francis and Argentine President Alberto Fernandez. | Photo: EFE

Vatican City, May 13 (RHC)-- Argentinean President Alberto Fernandez held a meeting on Thursday morning with Pope Francis at the Vatican, as part of his fourth and last stop of the tour of Europe in which he also visited Portugal, Spain and France.

Together with the First Lady, Fabiola Yañez and her entourage, the Argentinean president arrived at the Vatican at 10 a.m., local time in Rome. There, he was received by authorities of the Pontifical Household

and a cordon of honor of the Swiss Guard, in charge of the security of the Pope and the Holy See.

After the official greetings, the 30-minute audience between the two heads of state began in the study of the Paul VI Hall, known within the Vatican as "Il Fungo." Then the official photo was taken and there was a greeting from the Pontiff to the members of the official delegation, as well as an exchange of gifts.

The official delegation is composed of the First Lady, the Chancellor Felipe Solá, the Minister of Economy, Martín Guzmán; the Secretary General of the Presidency, Julio Vitobello; the Secretary of Worship, Guillermo Oliveri; and the Secretary of Communication and Press, Juan Pablo Blondi.

Oliveri declared to the press media that "the relationship between the President and the Pope is undoubtedly very good. It has been going on for a long time, they have known each other for many years", he said.

Fernandez also met with the Secretary of State, Cardinal Pietro Parolin, and with the Secretary for Relations with States, Monsignor Paul Gallagher.

According to local Argentine media, Chancellor Solá and Oliveri participated in this meeting, in which the entire international agenda was reviewed.

On the other hand, they visited the Vatican Academy of Sciences, presided by the Argentine Marcelo Sánchez Sorondo, which will host this Friday the seminar "Dreaming of a better restart", with the participation of Martín Guzmán and the Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Kristalina Georgieva.

As part of the tour, the Argentine President will have lunch with his Italian counterpart, Sergio Mattarella, at the Quirinale Palace, to later hold a working meeting at Palazzo Chigi with the President of the Council of Ministers, Mario Draghi.

Before leaving for the tour, Oliveri remarked to his country's media the coincidences between the Government and Pope Francis in relation to the management of the pandemic and the need for vaccines to reach all countries equally. He also highlighted the Pope's "silent help" in the debt renegotiation process.

Fernández received this week the support of the governments of Portugal, Spain and France in the debt renegotiation process with the IMF and the Paris Club, before the audience with Pope Francis.

The last face-to-face meeting between Fernandez and Pope Francis took place four and a half months ago, after the approval in Argentina of the Law on the Voluntary Interruption of Pregnancy (IVE).

Although the decision of the Argentine Congress generated acrimony with the local church, Fernandez always stated that it was a campaign commitment and a health issue.

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