

# *In U.S. City of Philadelphia, Pope Francis Pays Tribute to Women in Church*

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Philadelphia, September 26 (RHC)-- Pope Francis arrived in the so-called 'City of Brotherly Love' -- Philadelphia -- on Saturday for the final leg of his U.S. visit — a festive weekend devoted to celebrating Catholic families — and immediately called for the church to place greater value on women.

The Pontiff's plane touched down at the Philadelphia airport after takeoff from New York, bringing him to a city of blocked-off streets, sidewalks lined with portable potties, and checkpoints manned by police, National Guardsmen and border agents.

After speeches to Congress and the United Nations earlier this week aimed at spurring world leaders toward bold action on immigration and the environment, he is expected to focus more heavily on ordinary Catholics during his two days in Philadelphia.

Francis rode by motorcade to the downtown Cathedral Basilica of Sts. Peter and Paul and celebrated a Mass for about 1,600 people. In his homily, he said the future of the Catholic Church in the U.S. requires a much more active role for lay Catholics, especially women.

"It means valuing the immense contribution which women, lay and religious, have made and continue to make to the life of our communities," he said.

Francis has repeatedly said women should have a greater role in church leadership, though he has rejected the idea of ordaining women.

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