

A Little Pope-ourri

Pope Francis lands in Maryland Tuesday evening, and we will continue to pray for our Holy Father and his visit to our nation. Both of our boys want to meet him, but no one in our family will be shaking the Pope's hand.

This morning as we were driving to school, I was explaining to our sons that even though I am very, very fortunate to be attending a Mass that the Pope will celebrate—with several hundred priests and bishops—I won't actually meet him. But I still feel so blessed to be participating in his visit at all.

"This will be my third pope," I said.

Ten years ago when Pope Benedict XVI came to Washington, D.C., I joined a group of students from Notre Dame of Maryland University for the Mass in Nationals Park. The Pope was so far away, but he was there, and the Mass was magnificent.



When I saw Pope John Paul II in 1998, I just happened to be lucky. After I graduated from college, I traveled to Rome with a few friends. We went to the Vatican on a Sunday because we wanted to find a Mass—not with any thought of seeing the pope. When we arrived at the Vatican, thousands of people were gathered in St. Peter's Square for an enormous Mass. You had to have a ticket to get in, but somehow we talked our way in—even though (or maybe because) we didn't speak the Italian a guard was using. I could barely see the Pope, but it was an unforgettable day.

As I was describing that day to our sons this morning, our second grader interrupted me.

"Wait, Mama," he said. "You got to see...a saint?"

Sometimes it takes a child to put everything in perspective.

I still can't believe I'm going to see Pope Francis this week. And I wish I were taking our sons along, but traveling to see a pope would demand so much of them. So I'll tell them all about it afterward.

So instead we will watch the Mass in Philadelphia together from the comfort of our living room. We could even print out these Pope Francis coloring pages and paper doll.

Meanwhile, have you seen this greeting from Pope Francis?

A group of Catholic women bloggers in the Mid-Atlantic will be posting during the Pope's visit, and I am looking forward to joining them.



I hope you will be able to participate in the Holy Father's visit either in person or from afar!

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Papal poetry on the anniversary of the Pope's election

Dear Pope Francis, please don't forget those who long for motherhood