

Brooklyn students greet Pope Benedict as he arrives in New York

NEW YORK - Pope Benedict XVI arrived at New York's John F. Kennedy International Airport slightly ahead of schedule April 18, but two students from the Brooklyn Diocese's Catholic schools were ready for him.

Kaitlin Karcher, an eighth-grader at Our Lady of Grace School in Howard Beach, and Christopher Jordan, a fifth-grader at Divine Mercy Catholic Academy in Ozone Park, were chosen to hand Pope Benedict flowers as he arrived in New York for the second leg of his U.S. trip.

The pope arrived shortly after 9:30 a.m. aboard the Alitalia Boeing 777 that had carried him from Rome to Washington April 15.

In addition to the two schoolchildren, those greeting the pope at the airport included New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg; New York Gov. David A. Paterson; Bishop Nicholas DiMarzio of Brooklyn, whose diocese includes the airport; Cardinal Edward M. Egan of New York; and Archbishop Celestino Migliore, the Vatican's permanent observer to the United Nations, who also was hosting Pope Benedict as his houseguest.

Other dignitaries at the airport included Bishops William F. Murphy of Rockville Centre; Gregory J. Mansour of the Maronite Diocese of St. Maron of Brooklyn; Manuel Batakian of the Armenian Eparchy of Our Lady of Nareg in New York; and Thomas V. Daily, retired bishop of Brooklyn.

A fleet of U.S. military helicopters was arrayed near the papal plane parking slot, prepared to fly Pope Benedict, his entourage and some members of the media to the Wall Street heliport. From the heliport, the papal motorcade had just over a mile of Manhattan streets to travel to reach the United Nations for the pope's first appointment in the city.