



H. R. Haldeman Diaries Collection, January 18, 1969 – April 30, 1973

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Sunday, March 2.

The Vatican

Arrived at Fiumicino Airport, brief welcome, and into helicopters. Landed in Piazza S. Pietro, right in front of the steps to St. Peter's. Piazza was cleared of people. Crowds on the roofs and at the barricades at the entrances. Moved right into Vatican cars and drove through the gate at the left of the church, as you look at it.

Arrived finally at some inner courtyard in the Vatican. Met by a bishop from Chicago, and other dignitaries. Whole court lit up for television, as was every room we went through inside. We went up the elevators to Pope's floor, walked through a series of rooms. One of them was filled with the members of the North American College, who gave a tremendous cheer when the President came in. Then on to anteroom of Pope's chambers where we waited while President went in for private meeting, lasted over an hour.

In our party were fourteen, including the top protocol group plus several Catholic staff members. We were ushered into Pope's library. Pope and President sat in chairs at one end, we sat in two rows of facing chairs, at right angles to them. [diagram of seating arrangement] Pope spoke in English, read his prepared remarks. Television and stills covered it, so cameras were grinding all the way through it. Then we rose - Pope and President went to table at other end of room and exchanged gifts. Pope gave President a beautiful huge picture (17th century) of Piazza S. Pietro.

Then President introduced each of us to the Pope and he shook hands, chatted briefly with each, and gave us each a silver medal. He was most gracious and warm. During President's remarks, Pope responded with raised hands gesture to President's comment about Pope's visit to United States and speech at Yankee Stadium. Talks went well.

Trip home was uneventful. President slept a little but spent most of the time talking to Rogers and staff. Some of us tried the bunks, they're pretty good.



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Colorful arrival ceremonies at Andrews, with Cabinet, Congress leaders, troops, etc. Poor Agnew slipped on the icy runway during troop review and smashed his nose. Then went on TV to introduce President with huge cut on nose bleeding profusely. Then helicopter to White House.

Couple of sidebars. Kissinger's great delight in finally "one-upping" Hughes by asking him during troop review at Paris if his bag of gold got on the plane all right. Kissinger's reaction to announcement of Apollo shot tomorrow, "Well, I'm not going." Kissinger's note to Ziegler at some meeting that said, "Don't worry, they're taking the speakers in alphabetical order." Henry swings from very tense to very funny. He's getting into the swing of things pretty well.