



OLIVIER DOULIERY/ABACA PRESS/TNS  
U.S. President Barack Obama greets His Holiness Pope Francis on his arrival at Joint Base Andrews in Maryland on Tuesday, Sept. 22. The Pope is making his first trip to the United States on a three-city, six-day tour that will include Washington, D.C., New York and Philadelphia.

## Pope Francis Arrives In US, Faces A Polarized Country

BY NICOLE WINFIELD  
AND RACHEL ZOLL

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Pope Francis arrived Tuesday on the first visit of his life to the United States, bringing his humble manner and his “church of the poor” to a rich and powerful nation polarized over economic inequality, immigration and equal justice.

According to a rare honor to the pontiff, President Barack Obama and his wife and daughters met Francis at the bottom of the stairs on the red-carpeted tarmac at Andrews Air Force Base in Maryland after the pope’s chartered plane touched down from Cuba. Presidents usually make important visitors come to them at the White House.

Emerging from the plane to boisterous cheers from a crowd of hundreds, the smiling 78-year-old pontiff removed his skullcap in the windy weather and made his way down the steps in his white robes.

He was welcomed by a military honor guard, chanting schoolchildren, politicians, and Roman Catholic clerics in black robes and vivid sashes of scarlet and purple. Joe Biden, the nation’s first Catholic vice president, and his wife were among those who greeted him.

Eschewing a limousine, the pope climbed into the back of a modest little Fiat family car and promptly rolled down the windows, enabling the cheering, whooping crowds to see him as his motorcade took him to the Vatican diplomatic mission in Washington, where he will stay while in the nation’s capital. The choice of car was in keeping with his simple habits and his stand against consumerism.

During his six-day, three-city visit to the U.S., the pope will meet with the president on Wednesday, address Congress on Thursday, speak at the United Nations in New York on Friday and take part in a Vatican-

sponsored conference on the family in Philadelphia over the weekend.

The Argentine known as the “slum pope” for ministering to the downtrodden in his native Buenos Aires is expected to urge America to take better care of the environment and the poor and return to its founding ideals of religious liberty and open arms toward immigrants.

During the flight, Francis defended himself against conservative criticism of his economic views. He told reporters on the plane that some explanations of his writings may have given the impression he is “a little bit more left-leaning.”

But he said such explanations are wrong and added: “I am certain that I have never said anything beyond what is in the social doctrine of the church.” Joking about doubts in some quarters over whether he is truly Catholic, he said, “If I have to recite the Creed, I’m ready.”

He is the fourth pope ever to visit the United States.

Francis’ enormous popularity, propensity for wading into crowds and insistence on using an open-sided Jeep rather than a bulletproof popemobile have complicated things for U.S. law enforcement, which has mounted one of the biggest security operations in American history to keep him safe.

The measures are unprecedented for a papal trip and could make it nearly impossible for many ordinary Americans to get anywhere close to Francis. For anyone hoping to get across town when the pope is around, good luck.

For all the attention likely to be paid to Francis’ speeches, including the first address from a pope to Congress, his more personal gestures — visiting with immigrants, prisoners and the homeless — could yield some of the most memorable images of the trip.

“What the pope does in the United States will be more important than what he says,” said Mat Schmalz, a religious studies profes-

sor at Holy Cross college in Worcester, Massachusetts. “There are a lot of things he will say about capitalism and about wealth inequality, but many Americans and politicians have already made up their minds on these issues. What I would look for is a particular gesture, an unscripted act, that will move people.”

In Cuba, Francis basked in the adulation of Cubans grateful to him for brokering the re-establishment of diplomatic relations between the U.S. and the communist island.

On the plane, though, he told reporters he will not use his speech to Congress to call specifically for the U.S. to lift the Cold War-era trade embargo against Cuba.

He arrives at a moment of bitter infighting across the country over gay rights, immigration, abortion and race relations — issues that are always simmering in the U.S. but have boiled over in the heat of a presidential campaign.

Capitol Hill is consumed by disputes over abortion and federal funding for Planned Parenthood after hidden-camera videos showed its officials talking about the organization’s practice of sending tissue from aborted fetuses to medical researchers. While Francis has staunchly upheld church teaching against abortion, he has recently allowed ordinary priests, and not just bishops, to absolve women of the sin.

Francis’ visit comes three months after the U.S. Supreme Court legalized gay marriage, putting U.S. bishops on the defensive and sharply dividing Americans over how much they should accommodate religious objectors. The pope has strongly upheld church teaching against same-sex marriage but adopted a welcoming tone toward gays themselves, saying, “Who am I to judge?” when asked about a supposedly gay priest.

Americans are also wrestling anew with issues of racism. A series of deaths

in recent years of unarmed black men at the hands of law enforcement has intensified debate over the American criminal justice system. Francis will see that system up close when he meets with inmates at a Pennsylvania prison.

U.S. bishops, meanwhile, expect Francis will issue a strong call for immigration reform, a subject that has heated up with hardline anti-immigrant rhetoric from some of the Republican presidential candidates, especially Donald Trump.

Francis, the first Latin American pope, will be sending a powerful message on that front by delivering the vast majority of his speeches in his native Spanish.

“Our presidential candidates have been using immigrants as a wedge issue,” Miami Archbishop Thomas Wenski said. “It’s our hope that the visit of Pope Francis will change this narrative.”

Francis’ most eagerly watched speech will be his address to Congress. Republicans and many conservative Catholics have bristled at his indictment of the excesses of capitalism that he says impoverish people and risk turning the Earth into an “immense pile of filth.” Many conservatives have likewise rejected his call for urgent action against global warming.

Nevertheless, Francis enjoys popularity ratings in the U.S. that would be the envy of any world leader. A *New York Times*/CBS News poll conducted last week found 63 percent of Catholics have a favorable view of him, and nearly 8 in 10 approve the direction he is taking the church.

Just how far Francis presses his agenda in Washington is the big question.

Paul Valley, author of “Pope Francis, The Struggle for the Soul of Catholicism,” predicted both “warmth” and “some finger-wagging” from the pope.

“He won’t necessarily confront people head-on,” Valley said, “but he’ll change the priorities.”

### VW Smog-Test Trickery Erases \$26 Billion

DETROIT (AP) — Volkswagen AG’s smog-test scandal escalated Tuesday as the company acknowledged putting stealth software in millions of vehicles worldwide. The crisis has already cost VW more than 24 billion euros (\$26 billion) in market value.

The world’s top-selling carmaker now admits that 11 million of its diesel vehicles contain software that evades emissions controls, far more than the 482,000 cars identified by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency as violating clean air laws.

Volkswagen set aside an initial 6.5 billion euros (\$7.3 billion) to cover the fallout and “win back the trust” of customers. It also said this year’s profit projections will change, and warned that future costs remain undetermined.

CEO Martin Winterkorn apologized for the deception under his leadership and pledged a fast and thorough investigation, but gave no indication that he might resign. Meanwhile, Volkswagen’s ordinary shares fell another 20 percent Tuesday, to close at 111.20 euros.

“Millions of people across the world trust our brands, our cars and our technologies,” Winterkorn said Tuesday in a video message. “I am endlessly sorry that we have disappointed this trust. I apologize in every way to our customers, to authorities and the whole public for the wrongdoing.”

### EU Holds Emergency Migration Talks

BRUSSELS (AP) — The European Union’s two emergency meetings on the migration crisis this week won’t provide any quick solutions to ease the plight of tens of thousands of people seeking sanctuary in Europe despite a decision Tuesday to share 120,000 more refugees arriving in Greece and Italy.

As the EU scrambles to respond to scenes of people charging razor-wire fences, suffocating in trucks or bodies washing up on beaches, unity has crumbled as nations in the 28-member bloc trade barbs over who is to blame.

Nothing on the agenda of Tuesday’s interior ministers’ meeting or the summit of EU leaders on Wednesday will immediately help countries in Eastern Europe and the Balkans to manage their borders now. Or next week.

No measure will stop the flow of people moving across Europe, nor will any provide relief to authorities in individual EU countries trying to slow them down.

Indeed, more than 6,000 people could arrive in Greece alone over the two days until EU leaders end their dinner debate on medium and long-term policy plans.

### Deputy Saves 2 Girls From Drowning

DURHAM, N.C. (AP) — A North Carolina sheriff’s deputy says he heard wailing in the darkness and plunged into an apartment complex’s pond at night to rescue two young girls who, police say, had been thrown there to drown by their father.

Durham County Sheriff’s Deputy David Earp was off duty and says he rushed out with little more than his department T-shirt, badge and flashlight after the apartment manager called him at home around 9 p.m. Sunday to report some kind of trouble.

“I heard something about children, that they might possibly be in trouble,” Earp said in an interview Tuesday with The Associated Press. “And after I was informed that there were kids involved, instinct took over just to go out there and rescue them.”

Earp, who lives around the corner from the pond, spotted the girls in the dark with his flashlight and saw a 5-year-old floating and crying. Her 3-year-old sister was fully submerged. Earp says he charged into water about 5 feet deep and scooped them up, holding one in each arm.

He took no notice of the girls’ father, Alan Tysheen Eugene Lassiter, 29, of Raleigh — the man who was later charged with trying to drown his kids. In the heat of the moment, Earp was focused on just one thing: trying to save the girls’ lives.

### Clinton Breaks Keystone XL Silence

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) — Hillary Rodham Clinton said Tuesday she opposes construction of the Keystone XL pipeline, breaking her longstanding silence over a project criticized by environmentalists as a threat to the planet’s climate.

The Democratic presidential candidate said she decided to speak out after concluding the ongoing debate over whether the pipeline should be built had become a distraction to larger efforts to fight climate change.

That distraction, she said, is “unfortunately, from my perspective, one that interferes with our ability to move forward to deal with the other issues. Therefore I oppose it.”

Clinton’s announcement came as she has ceded ground in some polls to Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders, who has long opposed the project. It also followed the appearance of protesters at some of her recent campaign events holding signs that read, “I’m Ready for Hillary to say no KXL.”

The former secretary of state had previously said she shouldn’t take a position on the issue, because she didn’t want to interfere with the Obama administration as it considers whether to allow construction of a pipeline that would transport oil from Canada’s tar sands to refineries on the Gulf of Mexico.

### Abortion And A Government Shutdown

WASHINGTON (AP) — Senate Democrats thwarted a Republican effort to ban late-term abortions on Tuesday as GOP leaders strained to avoid a government shutdown in eight days over the dispute — all against a tangled backdrop of presidential politics.

Up next, in the first of a series of choreographed steps, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., set up a showdown vote for Thursday on stopgap legislation that would keep the government operating through Dec. 11.

But it would also block Planned Parenthood’s federal funds for a year, and Democrats are expected to block that measure, too, setting up subsequent votes on must-pass bills to keep the government open free of the dispute over Planned Parenthood and abortion.

## Greece Keeps Bailout Rescuer Tsakalotos As Finance Minister

BY DEREK GATOPoulos

Associated Press

ATHENS, Greece — Greece’s newly re-elected left-wing government has retained Euclid Tsakalotos as finance minister to continue tough negotiations with other euro-zone countries on the terms of a large new bailout deal.

The new Cabinet of Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras announced late Tuesday included few changes to key ministry posts.

Tsakalotos, 55, led the final stages of talks between the Tsipras government and bailout lenders for the 86-billion-euro (\$96 billion) bailout, after Athens abandoned a more combative stance toward creditors and agreed to implement new austerity measures.

Despite Tsipras’ policy U-turn, he was re-elected by a

wide margin in last weekend’s general election, and again formed a coalition government with a small right-wing party, the Independent Greeks.

Panos Kammenos, the junior coalition party leader, returned as minister of defense.

Although Greece has already implemented another round of tax hikes to secure the new bailout deal, the government has pledged to carry out major reforms aimed at long-term spending cuts, including an overhaul of the pension system, labor market rules and public administration.

Greece has survived on international rescue loans since 2010, and is hoping to improve repayment terms for its staggering national debt that is worth roughly 175 percent of the country’s annual output.

The mild-mannered Tsakalotos, an Oxford-trained former economics lecturer, is credited with rescuing summer bailout talks as Greece faced the renewed danger of an exit from the euro currency.

Left-wing party rebels who opposed their government’s compromise helped trigger the early election and formed a breakaway party that failed to gain any seats in parliament.

The new Cabinet saw the Tsipras government abandon an initiative to streamline government with fewer ministerial positions, re-introducing senior posts for culture, merchant marine, and several other portfolios.

Ioannis Mouzalas, a doctor and former aid group coordinator who was appointed migration minister under a four-week caretaker

government, was kept on to help Greece deal with a massive refugee crisis that has rattled the European Union.

The new Cabinet will be sworn in Wednesday.

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