



NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC AIRPORT CHAPLAINS

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Catholic Airport Chaplains from around the globe met at the XIV World Seminar for Catholic Airport Chaplains in Loreto, Italy on April 10 for a four day conference hosted by the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People. Sixty three chaplains and chaplaincy team members (20 from the USA) attended.

The theme of the conference, “Ninety Years from the Proclamation [by Pope Benedict XV] of Our Lady of Loreto as Patroness of Air Travelers” was presented by Archbishop Antonio Maria Vegliò, President of the Pontifical Council for Migrants and Itinerant People and Archbishop Agostino Marchetto, Secretary of the Pontifical Council.

We had many expert speakers address the topic. Archbishop Giovanni Tonucci, the Pontifical Delegate for the Shrine of the Holy House welcomed us on Sunday and the next day gave an address entitled “The Year for Priests and Sanctification of Airport Chaplains”. Archbishops Vegliò & Marchetto gave the inaugural and seminar addresses respectively. Fr. Giuseppe Santarelli, who is the Historian of the Holy House, offered much factual information about the Holy House itself before he spoke about Our Lady of Loreto and her role as patroness of air travelers.

Fr. Michael Zaniolo, Chaplain of O’Hare and Midway airports in Chicago, and president of the National Conference of Catholic Airport Chaplains in the USA, presented his address entitled: “Our Lady of Loreto in the Life and Mission of Airport Chaplains and Pastoral Agents.” Fr. Giorgio Rizzieri, Rome airport chaplain and Consultor for the Pontifical Council spoke about the “Pastoral Care of Civil Aviation in the Directives for the Civil Aviation Apostolate.”



Fr. Zaniolo greets the Holy Father

Deacon Angelo of Milan Malpensa airport presented a stirring address about the role of the deacon in airport chaplaincy. An important feature he described was praying the Liturgy of the Hours in the airport chapel with a group of airport workers each day.

We concluded with a bus trip to Rome where we had a special reserved section at the Wednesday audience with the Holy Father. His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI has always supported the ministry of Airport Chaplains with his prayers and graciously imparted his Apostolic Blessing upon us, our ministry, and those we serve: airport workers and travelers.