

AMERICAN AIRLINES TO SERVE PAPAL FLIGHTS

News / Airlines



American Airlines (and previously TWA) has the honor for the seventh time of transporting Pope Francis from Washington D.C. to New York City, Philadelphia and back to Rome.

[FlightAware](#) for type unknown

Route of the positioning flight from Dallas / Fort Worth to Andrews Air Force Base today.
(Image Credits: Flightaware)

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops chartered the airliner to American Airlines to carry the Pontiff to the different destinations in the U.S. The aircraft selected is a Boeing 777-200ER (Registration N776AN / MSN 29582 / LN 215) to carry the pontiff.

AA Pope Francis 777 modifications

Caption for Flying Flag: Kirti Shah, Aviation Maintenance Technician (AMT) for American Airlines makes sure that the Papal Flag can be flown proudly from the Boeing 777-200 cockpit.

The Vatican City State does not have a specific airplane designated for the Pope, neither operates a special jet specifically earmarked for the Pope. Instead, often relies on Italy's flag carrier Alitalia, which takes an aircraft out of its normal passenger operations schedule for this purpose. The selected aircraft is a common passenger airliner and does not have any special VIP fitting. Once concluded the journey, the aircraft returns to its normal operations.

AA Pope Francis 777 modifications

Getting Ready: Alan Relph and George Aggas, Aviation Maintenance Technicians for American Airlines apply the seal of Pope Francis to the 777-200.

The Pope's flight is often nicknamed *Shepherd One* by the media, while the actual callsign is *Volo Papale* (papal flight in Italian), followed by a flight number.

According to American Airlines, employees often cite the papal flight as a career highlight. The airline selected the crew of *Shepherd One* from different locations (including Miami, Dallas / Ft. Worth, Chicago, New York, Los Angeles, Tulsa and Raleigh / Durham), representing different faiths and persuasions.

Pope Francis is the fourth pope to visit the United States. The first was Pope Paul VI, who visited United Nations Headquarters in New York on October 4, 1965, 50 years ago, while the Pope who logged more visits to the U.S. was John Paul II with seven times. According to AA, this is the 7th time the company (including TWA) has carried the Pope.

- 2015: American Airlines: ADW-JFK-PHL-Rome (Pope Francis) – 777-200
- 1999: TWA: STL-Rome (Pope John Paul II) – 767-300
- 1995: TWA: EWR-BWI-Rome (Pope John Paul II) – 767-300
- 1993: American Airlines: DEN-Rome (Pope John Paul II) – 767-300ER
- 1987: TWA: Eleven-day, nine-city tour (Pope John Paul II) – 727 & 747
- 1979: TWA: Six-day, six-city tour and ADW back to Rome (Pope John Paul II) – 727
- 1965: TWA: Rome-JFK-Rome (Pope Paul VI) – 707
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