

Queen Elizabeth Greets Pope With Eggs, Whiskey and Beer

Queen Elizabeth met Pope Francis for the first time on Thursday and gave a bemused pontiff culinary delights from the royal estates, including a dozen eggs and a bottle of whisky.

"I've also brought something from all our estates, which is for you personally," said the queen, wearing a lavender dress and a purple hat, as she handed Francis a wicker basket full of food at the end of a 17-minute private meeting in the Vatican.

The 18 items from Buckingham Palace, Windsor, Sandringham and Balmoral also included two types of honey, "Coronation Best Bitter," "Grandad's chutney" and "Sandringham handmade aromatherapy soaps".

A Vatican official said the pope would likely share the food with other residents of the guest house where he has lived since his election after renouncing the spacious papal apartments or would donate it.

The Queen and Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh, met the pope in a modern room attached to the Vatican's audience hall without much of the ceremonial pomp that usually accompanies such visits.

A Vatican statement did not say what the two discussed. The Queen is also the Supreme Governor of the Church of England, which split from Rome in 1534.

The pope is Argentine and Britain went to war with Argentina over the Falkland Islands, which Argentina calls the Malvinas, in 1982.

To cut short any speculation that the two might have discussed

the Falklands, the British embassy reminded reporters that while the pope may be Argentine, the Vatican's official position on the territorial dispute is a neutral one.

Francis also gave the queen a gift for her eight-month-old great-grandson, Prince George of Cambridge. It was a sphere made of lapis lazuli, a deep blue semi-precious stone, topped with the silver cross of St. Edward.

"He will be thrilled by it," the queen told the pope. Then she paused and added: "When he is a little older."

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