

England and Wales bishops meet Pope during Rome retreat



The bishops of England and Wales had their first private meeting with Pope Francis today.

Along with Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor, the bishops are spending the week on retreat in the Villa Palazzola, the summer villa of the Venerable English College, 18 miles south of Rome. They travelled to the Vatican today to attend the General Audience and afterwards were granted an impromptu private meeting with Pope Francis in the Paul VI Hall.

During the meeting Cardinal Murphy-O'Connor told the Pope that his election and the first five weeks of his papacy had "brought fresh hope to the Church". Each bishop then individually greeted the Pope.

Early this morning the bishops celebrated Mass in St Peter's Basilica and then went to the Santa Marta residence where Pope Francis has been living since before his election last month. They had hoped to meet the Pope over breakfast but unfortunately he had left by the time they arrived.

Homepage: Archbishop Vincent Nichols, president of the bishops' conference, and the cardinal, with Pope Francis. Above: Francis with the whole bishops' conference. Photos: © Mazur/catholicnews.org.uk