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## Francis visits children who return 'surprise'

by NCR Staff

The Francis Chronicles

Pope Francis on Saturday morning visited the Pediatric Dispensary of Santa Marta in the Vatican. Then, at the Paul VI Hall, he met the children cared for at the Dispensary, along with their families and the volunteers who, every day, serve in the charitable institution, according to a Vatican radio report.

The children surprised the Holy Father with a small party ahead of his 77<sup>th</sup> birthday (Dec. 17), giving him a cake and a sweater.

"I thank you for this visit," the Pope said in a brief address. "Thank you for the love you have, the joy of these children, the gifts, the cake ... It was beautiful! Thank you so much! May the Lord bless you."

Then he greeted the children one by one.

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