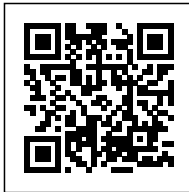


VATICAN RELEASES SCHEDULE FOR POPE FRANCIS' MONGOLIA VISIT IN SEPTEMBER

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The Vatican released Pope Francis' four-day schedule for the first papal visit to Mongolia in September, where the pontiff will meet with government leaders, engage in interreligious dialogue, and celebrate Mass for the country's small Catholic population.

Mongolia is home to about 1,300 Catholics, which is far fewer than 1% of the country's 3.3 million people. Pope Francis' motto for the trip is "Hoping Together." According to the Holy See's press office, the motto is intended to bring out two aspects of the apostolic journey, which is both a pastoral visit and a state visit.

"Hope is a specifically Christian virtue, yet one commonly accepted in non-Christian circles as well," a statement from the press office reads. "Consequently, the word 'Together' highlights the importance of bilateral cooperation between the Holy See and Mongolia. The motto 'Hoping Together' thus represents a shared ideal and a distinctive aspect of this apostolic journey."

The press office noted that the pope's presence will provide "a sign of immense hope and encouragement" to the nation's small Catholic population and "can offer a sign of hope for the universal Church."

The logo used for the papal visit is an outline of Mongolia painted with the colors red and blue to mimic the flag of the country. It portrays a ger, a traditional Mongolian dwelling, with yellow smoke, which is the color of the Vatican. There is a cross to the right of the ger and the motto is written in Mongolian on both sides.

Pope Francis will depart from Rome on the evening of Thursday, Aug. 31, and arrive in Ulaanbaatar, the nation's capital, on the morning of Friday, Sept. 1. He will leave on Monday, Sept. 4.