Vatican releases Pope Francis' itinerary for Abu Dhabi visit

Muscat: The state-owned Vatican News Agency has published Pope Francis' itinerary for his public mass that will be held in Abu Dhabi in February.

The pontiff's itinerary include an interfaith meeting, a visit to the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque, and the celebration of mass at Zayed Sports City.

The Pope will depart from Rome on Sunday, February 3, 2019 at 1 pm (Rome time) and is scheduled to arrive in Abu Dhabi Presidential Airport at 10 pm (local time).

The programme starts on Monday, February 4, 2019 at 12 noon with the welcome ceremony at the Presidential Palace, followed by the official visit to the Crown Prince of the Emirate, Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan. At 5 pm in the evening, the Pope will meet privately with members of the UAE-based Muslim Council of Elders in the Grand Mosque of Sheikh Zayed.At 6 pm on the same day, Pope Francis will proceed to the Founder's Memorial for an interfaith gathering.

On Tuesday February 5, 2019 at 9.15 am, Pope Francis will visit the Cathedral of Abu Dhabi and at 10.30 am he will celebrate Mass in the Zayed Sports City.

After Mass, the Pope will proceed directly to Abu Dhabi Presidential Airport where the farewell ceremony will take place. The papal plane is scheduled to depart at 1 pm (local time) and will arrive at Rome's Ciampino airport at 5 pm in the evening.

Pope Francis will become the first Pope in history to visit the Arabian Peninsula when he makes a journey to the United Arab Emirates next year.

Commenting on the landmark visit, Bishop Paul Hinder, Apostolic Vicar of Southern Arabia, said, "The Pope is a realist and knows that in a world of migration, human beings have to learn to live together, whether Christians among Muslims or Muslims among Christian and even both Muslims and Christians

among non-believers among other big religions, we have to learn to co-exist."

With inputs from Vatican News

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