

Pope Francis to visit United Arab Emirates in February

07/12/2018 09:58 by admin

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Vatican City: Pope Francis will visit Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates in February, the Vatican said on Thursday, in his seventh trip to a predominantly Muslim nation to call for inter-religious peace.

The trip will take place from Feb. 3-5. The Vatican said the pope had accepted an invitation from Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed al-Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi, and the tiny Catholic community there. He will attend an inter-faith meeting.

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“The theme of the visit is “Make Me a Channel of Your Peace” and that’s the Pope’s intention in going to the United Arab Emirates. How all people of goodwill can work for peace will be a major topic on this trip,” Vatican spokesman Greg Burke said.

The theme is taken from the opening words of the Prayer of Peace of Francis of Assisi, the saint whose name the pope took when he was elected in 2013.

“This visit, like the one to Egypt, (2017) shows the fundamental importance the Holy Father gives to inter-religious dialogue. Pope Francis visiting the Arab world is a perfect example of the culture of encounter,” Burke said.

Crown Prince Mohammed said in a tweet that the pope “is a symbol of peace, tolerance and the promotion of brotherhood. We look forward to a historic visit, through which we will seek dialogue on the peaceful coexistence among peoples.”

- Reuters