

Pope to serve mass near small Czech town during visit



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Prague - Pope Benedict XVI will serve a mass on the occasion of Saint Wenceslas pilgrimage near the Probootske Lake on the outskirts of the small Central Bohemian town of Stara Boleslav on September 28, Pavel Sefl, organiser and architect, told journalists today.

A white construction with the main rostrum in the middle, flanked by slightly opened wings for choruses and music, will be built on the Probootska meadow plot, Sefl said.

The proposal is based on the estimated visit by 30,000 people. The meadow is big enough for up to 120,000, Sefl said.

A number of traffic limitations will be connected with the visit, Sefl said.

The rostrum for the Pope will be divided into three levels. "The white construction with the red floor will be austere, simple and dignified. The land creates an amphitheatre with an elevation for the Pope's rostrum," Sefl said.

Pope Benedict XVI will visit the Czech Republic on September 26-28. The visit starts in the Church of the Virgin Mary Victorious in Prague which boasts the famous statuette of Infant Jesus.

On September 26 the Pope will meet Czech President Vaclav Klaus and leading Czech politicians and personalities.

Then he will have a joint prayer with priests, monks and religious movements' members in Prague's St Vitus cathedral.

On Sunday, September 27, he will visit Brno, the centre of Moravia. He will serve a mass at the Brno-Turany airport. In Brno he will bless bells and foundation stones to planned church buildings.

On Sunday afternoon he will return to Prague to meet representatives of the academic community and of the Oecumenical Council of Churches in the Czech Republic.

The last day of Benedict XVI's Czech visit will be Monday, September 28, the Day of St Wenceslas, saint patron of Bohemia.

The Pope is to celebrate a mass in Stara Boleslav, north of Prague, the place of St Wenceslas' martyr's death in the early 10th century where a pilgrimage is annually held on September 28.

The Pope is also to meet young people before departing from Prague at about 18:00.

Details on the visit can be found on the web page www.navstevapapeze.cz.

Benedict XVI is the second Pope to visit the Czech Republic during his pontificate. His predecessor, John Paul II, visited the Czech lands three times, in 1990, 1995 and 1997.

This will be Benedict XVI's 13th official visit abroad. Out of European countries he has visited only Germany, Poland, Spain, Austria and France so far.

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