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Promote Unity, Repair Relations, Walk Together

Pope Francis will visit Alberta, Quebec and Nunavut July 24-29. We asked Fr. Cristino Bouvette of the Office of the Papal Visit to Canada, three questions.

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What does this trip represent for the Church in Canada?

I would say this trip represents two things for the Church in Canada. First, an opportunity for the entire

Body of Christ to renew our commitment to the promotion of unity among ourselves and with all others. Second, for the bishops to demonstrate in an unmistakable way our absolute commitment as a Church to seek to repair relations with Indigenous peoples, where still needed, and to continue to pastorally accompany all those whom we have for generations.

What are the objectives of the Pope in this trip?

The Holy Father has referred to this trip as a penitential pilgrimage. I take that to mean that he desires to come in a posture of humility in order to accomplish both a gesture of sorrow for the wrongs of the past that continue to bleed into the present as well as to show his affirmation of Indigenous cultural expressions – including those of Indigenous Catholicism – by

participating in their pre-existing pilgrim activities. Ultimately, as our motto states, "To Walk Together" in faith and fraternity.

What do you expect from this trip?

I expect people who have been waiting for this to be genuinely touched and grateful for the healing it is sure to bring. But I also expect a renewed perspective on the part of the average Canadian to see the Church carrying on her work of evangelization and sanctification even through an opportunity such as this. I pray it brings about a renewed sense of unity across our vast country.

We thank Fr. Cristino Bouvette, the National Liturgical Coordinator of the Papal Visit to Canada for agreeing to provide his perspective on this historic event.

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