Pope Francis' visit to Jordan

Pope Francis' visit to the Kingdom which will take place on 24-25 May 2014, came as invitation by His Majesty King Abdullah second Ibn AL Hussein, and is being welcomed and warmly received by all Jordanians, Christians and Muslims alike.

The Visit of His Holiness which coincides with a very important occasion in Jordan, as Jordanians celebrate the 68ᵗʰ anniversary of Independence Day on the 25th May, and 20 years of establishing diplomatic relations between Jordan and Vatican since 1994. The pontiff's visit to the Kingdom is the fourth by a Pope in half a century, starting with Pope Paul VI's tour of Jordan and Palestine in 1964, And the first for his Holiness.

As a man of peace, Pope Francis' upcoming visit is expected to empower Jordan as "the guiding star" of the Middle East and the entire world, The May 24-25 visit comes at the "right time" to the "right place", as Jordan has been always the advocate of peace in Middle East, and would like to see a the impact of the visit as a drive to move the peace efforts a head as well as promote Jordan's tourism.

The government of Jordan took extra measures and arrangements to make this visit as successful as possible, for this reason the Prime Minister Dr. Abdullah Alnsour decided to establish a Media committee to prepare for this historical visit, headed by State minister of Information, and consisted of members representing Royal Court, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates, Ministry of Tourism and Iniquities, Jordan Tourism Board, commission of Baptism site, Greater Amman Municipality of Amman, Jordan radio and TV foundation and Jordan News Agency Petra.

Pope Francis' visit highlights the human values of interfaith dialogue and coexistence that the Kingdom is promoting through various initiatives at the international level. And it is received as a testimony that Jordan is a hub of peace and stability, it also reflects <u>the role that H. Majesty King Abdullah II has been playing in the peacemaking efforts in middle east for the past 15 years, and comes as a leap to promoting tolerance and coexistence of Muslims and Christians, and emphasizes the message of peace that all religions call for.</u>

The Kingdom is dedicated to maintaining peace and harmony between religions. His visit should be thought of as genuine proof of the peaceful conditions prevailing amongst Christians and Muslims in Jordan, as Jordan is a mosaic of different people and religions living in harmony in one geographic spot and enjoying political stability," he said, also referring to the Circassians and Armenians, as well as the different Arab refugees living in Jordan.

According to the State Minister of Information Mohammad Momani the Pope will be officially welcomed at the airport, after which he will meet His Majesty King Abdullah II and senior officials. Later he will hold mass at the Amman International Stadium, according to Father Rifat Bader, director of the Catholic Centre for Media and Studies (CCMS) and the official spokesperson for the visit on behalf of the Catholic Church in Jordan, around 20,000 people are expected to attend the mass.

The pontiff is also scheduled to visit the Baptism Site on Jordan River, and meet with children with disabilities, as well as Syrian and Iraqi refugees at the Catholic Church.

The pontiff is also scheduled to visit the the Bethany (Baptism Site on Jordan River) and he is scheduled to also meet with Syrian and Iraqi refugees, both Muslim and Christian, as well

as disabled people at the Latin church there. The Pope will also meet leaders of all churches in Jordan and Palestine, with the aim of strengthening Christian unity

The historical visit reflects the country's religious and touristic significance on the international map; it also underscores Jordan's security and stability as well as its role in renouncing violence and terrorism.

His Holiness visit is also received by a huge enthusiasm in the region and attracts great media coverage, as more than 1000 journalists and press persons are estimated to cover this visit.