

# *Cuban Catholic Bishops Welcome Message of Hope of Pope Francis*

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Havana, July 17 (RHC)-- Bishops of the Catholic Church in Cuba welcomed the message of hope and compassion that Pope Francis will bring to all Cubans during his visit from September 19th to the 22nd.

In a message published in this morning's edition of Granma newspaper, attending to the request by the Presidency of the Conference of Catholic Bishops, the Cuban bishops called for community prayer vigils to await the arrival of the Pontiff.

They also recalled the past visits to Cuba in 1998 of Pope John Paul II, now a Saint of the Catholic Church, and Benedict XVI, who traveled to Cuba in 2012 to mark the 400th anniversary of the discovery and presence among Cubans of the Virgin of Charity.

The Catholic bishops said that they anticipate a visit to the Shrine of the Virgin of Cobre by Pope Francis, coinciding with the centenary of the request to the Vatican made by the Mambises during the wars of independence, to declare this virgin as the Patron Saint of Cuba.

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