

# *Pope Francis Sends Message to the Cuban People*

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Havana, September 18 (RHC)-- Pope Francis has sent a video-message to the people of Cuba. The message was transmitted on Cuban TV on Thursday evening, following the nightly newscast.

The Pope said: "I'm coming to visit you to share faith and hope." Pope Francis expressed appreciation for the preparations for his visit, which will take place beginning Saturday, the 19th, when he arrives in the Cuban capital.

In the video-message aired on Cuban television last night, the first Latin American Pope said: "I wish to send you fraternal greetings before we personally meet." And he added: "I want to be among you as a missionary of mercy." The Pope also encouraged Cubans "to be missionaries of God's love."

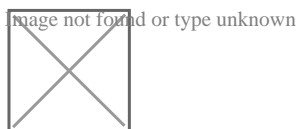
Pope Francis said that he would visit the Shrine of the Virgin of Charity of El Cobre "as one more pilgrim, like a son wishing to come home to his mother."

During his stay in Cuba, Pope Francis will officiate mass at Havana's Revolution Square on Sunday, September 20th; also in eastern city of Holguin on Monday, 21st, and at El Cobre in Santiago de Cuba on Tuesday, September 22nd.

The Holy Father will pay a courtesy visit to President Raul Castro in Havana and will meet with priests and religious people at Havana's Cathedral.

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