

Three Events of Concern for the Five Ways Fellowship

Is it really important that Pope Francis meet with other religious leaders during the papal visit? Scheduled for New York City on Friday morning, Sept. 25, 11:30 am, the US Catholic Bishops website calls it "Multi-religious service at 9/11 Memorial and Museum, World Trade Center."

The Vatican website is calling it "Interreligious Encounter at Ground Zero Memorial."

Will it be a prayer service with the various representatives not mingling, or will it be a time for the representatives of many religions to talk with (encounter) each other? This probably is still being developed.

CNN (Cable News Network) is using a secular description: "Visits ground zero memorial."

I am sure that it will not be just a visit to ground zero, without any religious and spiritual significance. Is the CNN description another reflection of the increasing disregard of religion by our national media?

When one considers how many groups the pope wants to meet, the inclusion of other religious leaders at ground zero indicates that Missionary Ecumenism and Interreligious Dialogue has a vital role in Pope Francis' visit to the USA.

Will Pope Francis explicitly invite Americans to accept Jesus as their Lord and Savior during his visit to our country? He will probably not engage in explicit evangelization. It will be very interesting to see during his address to Congress how he speaks of Jesus. How will he cite the Bible?

His encyclical *Laudato Si* gives us some indication, because he began that document by citing extensively the Eastern Orthodox Patriarch Bartholomew (#s 7-9) and towards the end, quoted Moslem poet Ali al-Khawas (#233, n. 159). He concluded the encyclical with two prayers, one to be used by who believe in God, and then one by all Christians. (#246). One can read the entire encyclical for free on the Vatican website.

During his visit to Cuba and the USA, we can expect him to appeal to every religion, and to people of good will. He will do it in his very personal way.

Let us redouble our prayers for the safety and inspiration of Pope Francis during his visit.

Two other events in the next four weeks need our prayers. Father Greg Gallagher, OMI, the third member of the administrative team for the USA Province, is currently serving as president of the US Catholic Mission Association. Every five years, USCMA holds a congress to address the challenge of evangelization today. The Congress is being held in Houston, TX, from Oct. 1-4. He welcomes your prayers. More about this can be found on the home page of the Mission-Unity-Dialogue website of the USA Province (www.harrywinter.org).

Finally, Father Seamus Finn, OMI, who has so many contacts in the world of Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation, has been invited to attend a "Day of Courageous Conversation," led by the Most Rev. Dr.

Thabo Makgoba, Anglican Archbishop of Cape Town, South Africa, Oct. 9. This meeting will bring together leaders of the mining industry, civil society, government and religion.

Mining is an industry which has taken a lot of blame in recent years, for the way it sometimes treats the miners and the land it excavates. Recently, rather than confront the mining industry, religious leaders are insisting on dialogue.

Seamus welcomes your prayers for this meeting and concern.