

Pope asks for prayers for Benin trip

John Thavis Catholic News Service | Nov. 14, 2011

VATICAN CITY -- Pope Benedict XVI asked for prayers for his trip to Benin and for those suffering from violence on the African continent.

The pope, addressing pilgrims at his noon blessing Nov. 13, said he was traveling to Benin "in order to strengthen the faith and hope of Christians in Africa."

"I entrust this trip and the inhabitants of this beloved continent to your prayers, especially those who experience insecurity and violence," he said. He prayed that Mary give support to all those working for reconciliation in Africa.

During the Nov. 18-20 visit, the pope planned to unveil a document he wrote as a follow-up to the 2009 Synod of Bishops on Africa. The text synthesizes the synod's conclusions and presents pastoral priorities for the church in Africa.

The pope said the whole point of the synod was to help make Christians "the salt of the earth and the light of the world."

The pope's schedule in Benin included meetings with political authorities and interreligious representatives, an encounter with children, liturgies with Catholics and a Mass to present the post-synodal document.

The Benin trip is Pope Benedict's second apostolic visit to Africa. He visited Cameroon and Angola in 2009.

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