



# The Holy See

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***VIDEO MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS  
ON THE OCCASION OF THE UPCOMING  
APOSTOLIC JOURNEY TO COLOMBIA***

[6-11 SEPTEMBER 2017]

Dear people of Colombia, in a few days I will visit your country. I will come as a pilgrim of hope and peace to celebrate with you the faith in our Lord and also to learn from your charity and your perseverance in seeking peace and harmony.

I cordially greet and thank the President and the Bishops of the Episcopal Conference for their invitation to visit Colombia. I also thank each one of you who welcomes me to your land and into your heart. I know you have worked — and you have worked hard — to prepare for this encounter. My thanks go to all those who have collaborated and continue to do so, so that it may become a reality.

“Let’s take the first step” is the motto of this trip. It reminds us that we always need to take a first step in any activity or project. It also urges us to be the first to love, to build bridges, to create fraternity. Taking the first step encourages us to go out to meet the other, to reach out our hand and to exchange a sign of peace. Peace is what Colombia is looking for and has long been working to achieve. A stable, lasting peace, so that we can see and treat each other as brothers and sisters, not as enemies. Peace reminds us that we are all children of the same Father who loves us and comforts us. I am honoured to visit this land rich in history, culture, faith; men and women who have worked with determination and perseverance to make it a place in which harmony and brotherhood reign, in which the Gospel is known and beloved, where saying ‘brother’ and ‘sister’ is not a strange gesture but a true treasure to be protected and defended. The world today needs counsellors of peace and dialogue. The Church is also called to this task, to promote reconciliation with the Lord and with our brothers and sisters, but also reconciliation with the environment, which is a creation of God and which we are exploiting in uncivilized way. May this visit be as a fraternal embrace to each one of you and may you feel the consolation and tenderness of the Lord.

Dear brothers and sisters of Colombia, I wish to experience these days with you with a joyful soul, with gratitude to the Lord. I embrace you with affection and ask the Lord to bless you, to protect

your country and grant it peace. And I implore our Mother, the Blessed Virgin, to take care of you. And do not forget to pray for me. Thank you, and see you soon.