

This is what the visit of the King and Queen of England to Pope Francis in April 2025 will be like

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(ZENIT News / London, 03.23.2025).- The upcoming visit of King Charles III and Queen Camilla to Italy and Vatican in April is expected to mark an important moment in British-Vatican relations. While the British Royal Household has confirmed an audience with Pope Francis on April 8 as part of the trip, the Vatican has yet to officially confirm the meeting, adding an element of uncertainty to the visit.

Scheduled from April 7 to 10, the royal visit will focus primarily on the Vatican and the Catholic Church's for the 2025 Jubilee Year. It also comes at a time when Pope Francis, having recently left the hospital on March 23, is under medical orders to rest for two months. The possibility of an in-person meeting remains open, though it will likely depend on the Pope's health.

A Visit Rich in Symbolism

Beyond a potential audience with the Pope, the British monarchs will engage in several highly symbolic activities. They are set to attend an ecumenical service on environmental stewardship, "Care for Creation," in the Sistine Chapel—an issue that resonates with both Charles and Francis. The King, a long-time environmental advocate, has often spoken about the moral responsibility of leaders to protect the planet. Pope Francis, in turn, has made

climate change a central theme of his papacy, as reflected in his encyclical «Laudato Si'». Their shared commitment to ecological concerns could make this visit a meaningful moment of unity between the Vatican and the British Crown.

Another notable stop on the itinerary is the Papal Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls. According to Buckingham Palace, the site holds historical ties to English monarchs before the Reformation, reinforcing King Charles' efforts to acknowledge the shared history of Catholicism and Anglicanism.

Adding to the religious and cultural significance of the visit, members of the Choir of His Majesty's Chapel Royal and the Choir of St. George's Chapel, Windsor, will perform both at the Sistine Chapel service and at the basilica, further emphasizing the deep historical and artistic connections between Britain and the Vatican.

A Meeting with Catholic Leaders and a Historic Address in Italy

While King Charles engages with religious leaders and scholars—including seminarians from Britain and the Commonwealth—Queen Camilla will meet with Catholic nuns of the International Union of Superiors General (IUSG). These religious women have been at the forefront of efforts to combat human trafficking and gender-based violence, reflecting the Queen's long-standing support for initiatives that protect women and children.

The second half of the royal visit will focus on diplomatic and political engagements in Italy. On April 9, King Charles will make history as the first British monarch to address a joint session of the Italian Parliament. This unprecedented speech will likely underscore the importance of British-Italian ties at a time of evolving political dynamics within Europe and beyond.

Building on a Legacy of Catholic-Anglican Reconciliation

The trip follows Charles' historic coronation in May 2023, an event that was hailed as a milestone for Catholic-Anglican relations. It was the first British coronation in 400 years to include the participation of a Catholic bishop. Adding further symbolic weight, a relic of the True Cross, gifted by Pope Francis to the King, played a central role in the ceremony's opening procession.

The coronation also set a new precedent for religious inclusion. Leaders from Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, and Sikh traditions were present, reflecting Charles' commitment to fostering interfaith dialogue and unity. This upcoming visit to the Vatican is expected to reinforce that same spirit of openness.

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