

Pope to visit D.C., New York in April: First visit to the U.S.

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Pope Benedict XVI will make his first papal visit to the U.S. in April, stopping at the United Nations and the White House.

Vatican ambassador Archbishop Pietro Sambi, addressing American bishops on November 12, said Benedict's visit is scheduled for April 15-20. The pontiff, who turns 81 on April 16, will visit only New York and Washington, though a number of U.S. cities had publicly lobbied for a papal visit.

"The pope will not travel much but will address himself to the people of the United States and the whole of the Catholic Church," Sambi said.

Benedict's visit is timed to mark the establishment of the first dioceses in the U.S. nearly 200 years ago, Sambi said. The trip to the U.S. will be Benedict's first as pope and the first papal visit since Pope John Paul II visited St. Louis in 1999.

In addition to celebrating masses at New York's Yankee Stadium and the Washington Nationals' new ballpark, now under construction, Benedict will visit Ground Zero in New York with families of those who perished there on September 11, 2001. - *Religion News Service*