

Remarks on the 1987 Papal Visit

In preparation for the Holy Father's 1987 visit to Fort Simpson, the Denendeh Papal Visit Committee asked residents of the area what does the Holy Father's visit mean to them?

Here are some of their replies:

- Celine Lafferty (Fort Simpson elder who was to meet the Pope at the airport):
"It is a great privilege for us that the Pope is coming to our island of Fort Simpson."
- Cathy Nahanni (young mother, secretary for the Fort Simpson Dene band)
"This is a time for Native people to get together and share their faith. The Pope just makes the celebration better."
- Maria Broadbent (clerk at the Bay)
"I think that it is great for the elders around here. For me, spirituality, it does not mean much. It was really interesting the last time and it will be this time, though, to see so many people from so many communities."
- Melissa Hardisty (Grade 4 student, 11 years old)
"I am excited because it's the first and last time the Pope will ever be here."
- Gerald Antoine (Chief, Fort Simpson)
"He's fulfilling a promise by accepting our invitation to return. I am especially happy for the elders, for them this visit is a prayer come true."
- Ernest Cazon (member of the Denendeh Papal Visit Committee)
"I think he is coming at an appropriate time. Our people right now are in a state of limbo – losing their traditions which they are fighting to maintain and their religion is also suffering. With his coming it will reaffirm their belief and if this is the case it will get them back on tract. When they see the Pope they will be looking at Jesus' representative."
- Adeline Hardisty (community health care worker for 17 years and an elder who was to meet the Pope)

“A representative of the Lord is coming to our land, finally. I think it is a great thing for the people of the North. I am sure it will change things because he is a holy man.”

Don Morin

(log builder who built the podium)

“For me it means a celebration of the Dene people. It’s a good feeling.”