



Briefing for those attending London Protest the Pope March and Rally 18th September 2010

We want to have a safe and enjoyable day so we have put together this briefing pack for your information.

Before you arrive

As we are protesting the Pope, you could make yourself a nice Pope hat to wear. You should make this from red cardboard- instructions are given later in this pack.

Make sure you bring with you:

- Umbrella
- Drinking water
- Sun protection cream (you never know!)
- Pope hat (see below)
- Sensible clothing for the weather
- Sensible shoes
- Only as much as you can carry- you will be walking at a slow pace for a couple of hours

Arrival

- Allow plenty of time for the journey to the assembly area, bearing in mind the severe traffic congestion that is expected.
- There is no parking available and the roads surrounding the area will be closed.
- Public transport is also likely to be affected and tube stations crowded.
You should aim to be at the assembly area at 1.30pm- **The Protest the Pope group will assemble at the top of Picadilly. There will be stewards to direct you from Hyde Park Corner tube station.**
- We will be carrying a large PtP banner and you should look out for fellow Pope hats to find us!

The timetable for the march (subject to Police requirements on the day) is:

1.30pm protestors begin to assemble

2pm speech by Sue Cox, sex abuse survivor

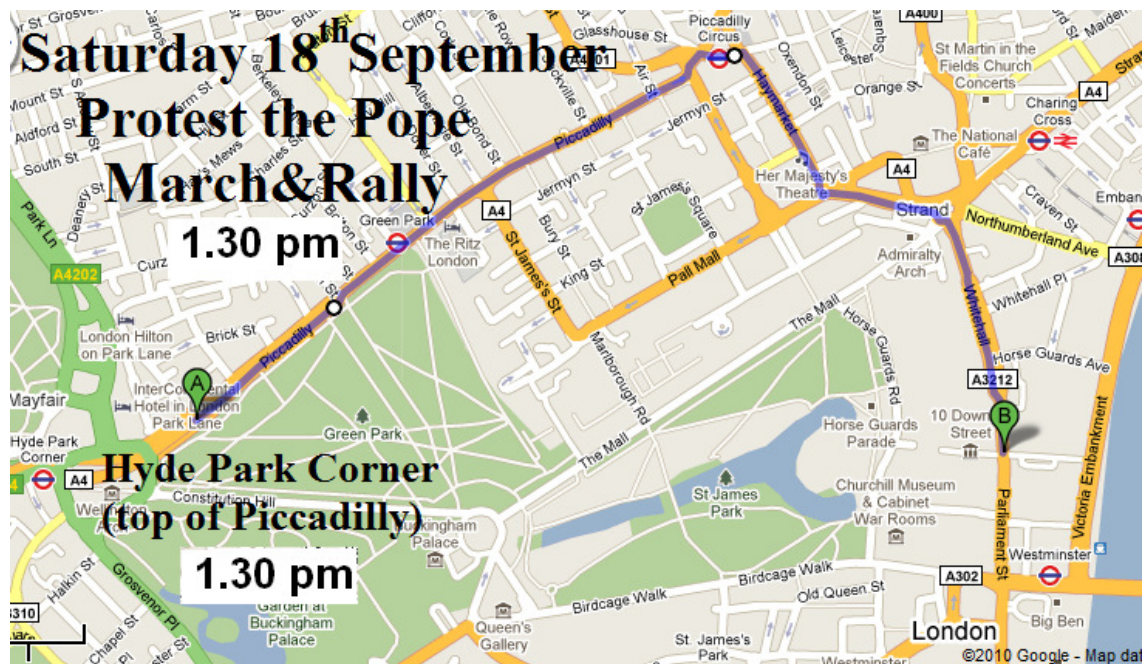
2.10pm 'Stand by me' sung by soloist David Somerset Barnes

2.20pm performance by BHA Choir leading 'You'll never walk alone.'

2.30pm march moves off and proceeds through central London via **Piccadilly, Piccadilly Circus, Haymarket, Trafalgar Square and Whitehall.**

3.30pm rally outside **Downing Street** featuring:

- Barbara Blaine, SNAP, the Survivor's Network of those Abused by Priests
- Clara Connolly, Women Against Fundamentalism
- Andrew Copson, British Humanist Association
- Professor Richard Dawkins, scientist
- Dr Ben Goldacre, journalist
- Johann Hari, journalist
- Father Bernard J Lynch, an openly gay catholic priest
- Maryam Namazie, One Law for All
- Pragna Patel, Southall Black Sisters
- Terry Sanderson, National Secular Society
- Peter Tatchell, human rights campaigner



During the March

- Please listen to the Stewards and Police - they will be very visible in high visibility tabards and are there for our safety- if they ask us to move on, slow down, disperse or whatever, please do so.

- Please be respectful and remember that we are not protesting against Catholics or against the Pope personally - we are protesting that the head of a state that commits human rights abuses is being allowed a state visit.
- We know the issues are emotive and the feelings strong, but please be a part of the inclusive atmosphere. The Protest the Pope Campaign does not advocate violence or anti-religious sentiment.
- At some point during the parade there may be a counter demonstration made up of Catholics. When we pass this counter group, antagonism is not encouraged- rise above it and respect their right to protest, even if we don't agree with their opinion.
- Anyone considered under the influence of drugs or alcohol will be asked to leave by organisers.

How to make your Pope hat

You will need a large piece of red paper or card- about the size of a full piece of newspaper.

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Image from thegauntlet.ca

Step 1: Grasp the paper firmly and fold it widthwise.

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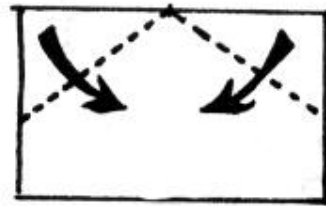


Image from thegauntlet.ca

Step 2: Fold the two top corners of the page so they meet in the middle.

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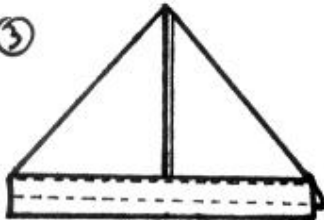


Image from thegauntlet.ca

Step 3: Fold the bottom flap (only the one closest to you) in half, then fold the flap up over the hat.

④

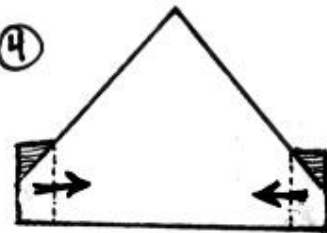


Image from thegauntlet.ca

Step 4: Turn the paper over and fold the flaps on the sides toward the middle. How tight or loose you fold the flaps will determine how tight or loose the hat's "headband" will be.

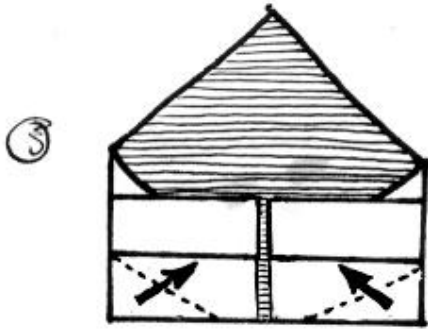


Image from thegauntlet.ca

Step 5: Fold bottom corners in.

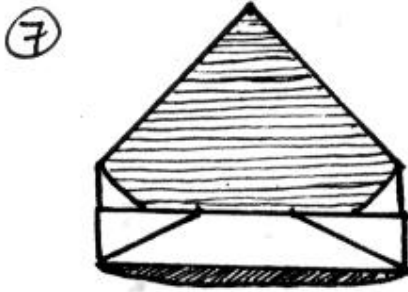


Image from thegauntlet.ca

Step 7: Pull the bottom hole open and place the hat on your head. Congratulations, you're the new leader of the Roman Catholic church!

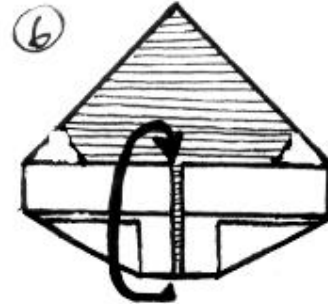


Image from thegauntlet.ca

Step 6: Fold the bottom point in half, then up again so that you can tuck the point in behind the band.

More information on the Protest the Pope Campaign

The main details about the campaign are below and also available at www.protest-the-pope.org.uk

The diverse groups who support this campaign have many different reasons for not approving of the State Visit to the UK by the Pope in September 2010. They all however share the following view:

- That the Pope, as a citizen of Europe and the leader of a religion with many adherents in the UK, is of course free to enter and tour our country.
- However, as well as a religious leader, the Pope is a head of state and the state and organisation of which he is head has been responsible for:
 - opposing the distribution of condoms and so increasing large families in poor countries and the spread of AIDS
 - promoting segregated education
 - denying abortion to even the most vulnerable women
 - opposing equal rights for lesbians, gay, bisexual and transgender people
 - failing to address the many cases of abuse of children within its own organisation.
 - rehabilitating the holocaust denier bishop Richard Williamson and the appeaser of Hitler, the war-time Pope, Pius XII.

The state of which the Pope is the head has also resisted signing many major human rights treaties and has formed its own treaties ('concordats') with many states which negatively affect the human rights of citizens of those states. As a head of state, the Pope is an unsuitable guest of the UK government and should not be accorded the honour and recognition of a state visit to our country.

Frequently asked questions

(1) Do you want The Pope banned from Britain?

No. We do not want the Pope banned from Britain. We simply do not believe that his visits should be a State Visit. By contrast his predecessor's visit to our country (John Paul II in 1982) was a pastoral visit. What has also upset many people is that this visit is to be paid for by the British tax payer. If he wants to finance his own trips – or if Catholics and other supporters in the UK wish to raise the money privately to sponsor his visit, that is up to them.

(2) What's so bad about the visit being a State Visit?

The Pope has already shown us that he is going to use this visit to tell us how we all should live and to interfere in our laws (ref. the attack on the Government's draft Equality Bill in February 2010). No other head of state would be allowed to do this. But then no other head of state is also the leader of a world religion. It is ironic, given the Pope's latest attack on our democracy, that he expected to address MPs in Parliament when he visits. We think this is an abuse of the Pope's position. Further, the state of which he is head has been responsible for:

- * opposing the distribution of condoms and so increasing large families in poor countries and the spread of AIDS
- * promoting segregated education
- * denying abortion to even the most vulnerable women
- * opposing Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender rights, including universal decriminalisation of homosexuality
- * failing to address the many cases of abuse of children within its own organisation.
- * rehabilitating holocaust deniers and appeasers like Bishop Richard Williamson and the war-time Pope, Pius XII.

The state of which the Pope is the head has also resisted signing many major human rights treaties and has formed its own treaties ('concordats') with many states which negatively affect the human rights of citizens of those states. As a head of state, the Pope is an unsuitable guest of the UK government and should not be accorded the honour and recognition of a state visit to our country.

(3) Are you not attacking the Pope's freedom of speech?

No. The Pope, as a citizen of Europe and the leader of a religion with many adherents in the UK, is of course free to enter and tour our country. He is free to visit the UK and address his supporters at his own expense – or theirs. The British tax-paying public, made up of people of many different religions and none, should not have to pay for sectarian religious leaders to visit the country. State visits should be secular, non-sectarian events.

(4) Isn't focusing on the Pope a bit personal?

It's not just that this Pope is more reactionary than previous popes (which he is) but that the policies and practices of the Catholic Church are considered so damaging and divisive, both to Catholics and non-Catholics. The Pope does have a personal responsibility in this, as he is effectively an autocrat who rules the Church (and the Vatican State) much as any medieval monarch once did, though he no longer has the power to kill or imprison people and start wars.

(5) Does the Pope need our money?

No. The visit will cost millions of pounds that could be used for health, education or other hard pressed services. By contrast the Vatican is extremely wealthy. The finances of the Catholic Church are entirely opaque and mired in controversy so no one outside the Church can be sure how wealthy it really is. We do know that the Italian tax payers alone give the Vatican about € 1000 million every year. A recent estimate (broadcast by the Penn & Teller documentary) put the total of the Catholic Church's assets at US \$50 billion.

(6) Isn't the Vatican a real State?

Yes, legally, but it is unique. The Vatican is an artificial State inhabited mainly by priests. It was established by the Lateran Treaty in 1929 with the Fascist dictator Mussolini and covers 109 acres in the centre of Rome. It is extremely powerful and its "moral" crusades adversely affect the lives of millions of people in Europe and in the world. Officially part of the UN, its "observer-state" status means it engages in UN debates on a variety of issues ranging from favourites, such as birth control, abortion and homosexuality, to the environment, war and global trade. The Vatican has diplomatic relationships with almost all the Countries in the world (174 when John Paul II died) and in many EU countries they benefit from the support of Catholic politicians or in many cases of Christian political parties. Of the 27 countries of the European Union, 14 are bound to the Vatican by at least one treaty. No other religion has such a power in Europe and in the World, thus prompting the Economist to publish an investigation about the diplomatic service of the Vatican, questioning whether it deserves its special status in the UN (21/07/2007)