Pope is more welcome than a Mufti or a Rabbi?

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The Pope's first state visit to UK is starting tomorrow and looks like the British public is not to happy about it.

I was scanning the British newspaper headlines and it is pretty clear that majority of people-judging from the newspapers, are not happy to see their government spend tax dollars to welcome a religious leader in a secular country.

A quote by Peter Tatchell - a human rights campaigner makes lot of sense. He says

"We object to the British government honoring him with a state visit -- we do not think he deserves it," Human rights campaigner Peter Tatchell, spokesman of the Protest the Pope group, told CNN. "We also object to the fact that this visit has been funded by the taxpayer at the public expense. We do not as a country fund visits by the Grand Mufti of Mecca, or the Chief Rabbi of Jerusalem, so why should the pope's visit receive privileged..."

Why indeed should the Pope be any more special than Mecca's Mufti or Jerusalem's Rabbi? Is it because Britain is a majority Christian nation? If that is the logic-majority religion gets special privilege then the whole idea of freedom of religion and democracy is defeated.

Religion, I have always believed is a bad influence on democracy and freedom. If Britain and any other nation who considers itself democratic continues to accord special privileges to a religious group then slowly and surely its democratic values and civil freedom will erode.