

Russian president: We want better Vatican ties

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VATICAN CITY (AP) — Russia's president says Moscow plans to improve its ties with the Vatican.

Tensions between the Russian Orthodox and Roman Catholic churches over property disputes and other issues have so far made it impossible for any pope to visit Moscow.

Russian President Dmitry Medvedev told Italian reporters in an interview ahead of the G-8 summit in Italy this week that relations between his country and the Vatican will "in all likelihood be developed further." He also said the possibility of diplomatic ties is under discussion.

He declined to say if Pope Benedict XVI will travel to Russia anytime soon.

The previous pontiff, Polish-born John Paul II, was frustrated in his desire to go to Russia.

Part of the interview was shown Sunday on Italian state TV.

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