

# Vatican confirms pope will meet with Israeli president

VATICAN CITY - Pope Benedict XVI is scheduled to meet with Israeli President Shimon Peres at the papal summer residence in Castel Gandolfo, a Vatican official confirmed to Catholic News Service Aug. 24.

The Sept. 6 meeting will come just three days after Israeli and Vatican representatives meet in Jerusalem to discuss financial issues related to Catholic institutions in Israel.

Peres, who met with Pope Benedict in April, was elected in June as Israel's president, a largely symbolic role.

Peres has served as prime minister of Israel twice, as well as in a number of high-ranking government posts. In 1994 he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his work on the Oslo accords, which affirmed the Palestinian right of self-governance.

Talks between Israel and the Vatican through a bilateral permanent working commission started up again in May after five years of inactivity. The joint commission is working out a plan for an agreement on issues related to church property, taxation and the legal rights of church institutions in Israel.

Peres' visit with the pope will be part of an official visit to Italy in which he will also meet with Italian political leaders.