

The Russian president gave a positive assessment to the talks in the Vatican



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ROME, July 5. /TASS/. Russian President Vladimir Putin discussed with Pope Francis the issue of protecting the Christian population of the Middle East and humanitarian assistance for Syria, the Russian leader told a news conference after talks with Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte.

“We discussed the issues of protecting the Christian population of the Middle East and humanitarian assistance in Syria. It is important that the positions of Russia and the Vatican coincide in the issues concerning traditional values, promoting inter-religious and inter-civilizational dialogue,” the Russian leader said.

Putin recalled that at the meeting with the pontiff the issues of developing relations between Russia and the Vatican were also discussed. The sides agreed on paying special attention to cooperation in the fields of culture, education, and healthcare, he noted.

The Russian president gave a positive assessment of the talks in the Vatican. “This was a very kind discussion. [We spoke about] some international issues and also about developing bilateral relations between Russia and the Vatican, including the spiritual aspect of this cooperation and humanitarian ties.”

Putin arrived on his sixth visit to Vatican City on Thursday to hold his third meeting with Pope Francis. During his visit to the Holy See in 2000 and 2003, Putin met with Pope John Paul II. In 2007, he met with Pope Benedict XVI. His previous meetings with Pope Francis took place in 2013 and 2015.

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