

## Khatami meets the Pope

Written by Chris Perver  
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Former Iranian President Khatami visited the Vatican today for an audience with Pope Ratzinger, in an effort to improve relations between Islam and Roman Catholicism. It seems the Pope was forced to eat humble pie during the visit, when Khatami told reporters at a conference that there were still deep wounds between Islam and the Vatican, stemming from the Pope's recent remarks that Islam is a religion that is spread by the sword. Last year, the Pope visited a Turkish mosque and [prayed](#) with his Muslim companion, in an attempt to heal the rift between the two religions.

**Quote:** *"In deference to Muslim custom, Benedict removed his red-leather shoes and slid his feet into white slippers before walking into the building, illuminated dramatically by scores of lanterns suspended from the blue-tiled ceiling. Cagrici, the mufti, led Benedict through the mosque, reaching the mihrab, or niche, that faces Mecca. There the two men paused in silent reverence. The pope folded his arms over his midsection, just below the large golden cross dangling from his neck, cast his eyes downward and, finally, bowed his head as the turbaned mufti standing at his side said a brief prayer.*

After his meeting with the Pope, Khatami will be speaking at the pontifical Gregorian University on peace in Islam and the Christian world. He will meet Italian Prime Minister [Roman Prodi](#), and undertake speaking engagements at other Italian universities.

**Quote:** *"At Friday morning's conference, Khatami, speaking through a translator, said that Christianity and Islam needed to rediscover their common roots as monotheistic religions in order to improve relations. Photo "If Christian and Islamic societies could only rely on love and justice and get back to these founding principles and if together we fought*

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*against violence and extremism ... then we can lay the foundations to heal any wound," he said.*

That is, any wound apart from Khatami's hatred of Jews. Just a few weeks ago at an international conference in Kazakhstan on the subject of Iran's nuclear programme, Khatami told Israeli journalists to "[go to hell](#)" and refused to speak with them. At the World Conference of Religions for Peace, he [stormed out of the room](#), when Chief Rabbi Yonah Metzger was speaking. He told Yasser Arafat that the Israel-Palestinian peace process would fail, and that "all Palestine" must be liberated if there ever was to be peace in the Middle East. He also described Israel as a [parasite](#) in the heart of the Muslim world.

Source [Topix](#),

[BBC](#)