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Pope Paul Willing to Meet Patriarch

VATICAN CITY (AP)—A Vatican official said Wednesday that Pope Paul VI has indicated a willingness to meet Patriarch Athenagoras I, spiritual leader of world Orthodoxy, during the Roman Catholic leader's trip to the

Holy Land Jan. 4-6.

The official said the spiritual ruler of the world's 550,000,000 Roman Catholics informed Athenagoras about the purpose of his Holy Land trip and in doing so indicated a willingness to meet the patriarch in Palestine if Athenagoras decides to go there.

In announcing his unprecedented trip a week ago, Pope Paul said he hoped it would serve the cause of Christian unity.

ATHENAGORAS, who gave up his American citizenship to become spiritual leader

of 150,000,000 Orthodox Christians, proposed last Friday that a Christian summit meeting be held in the Holy Land during the Pope's visit there.

The official said the Pope made no mention in his letter of Athenagoras' proposal for such a conference.

But the official said the letter was in effect a reply to Athenagoras and a diplomatic way of letting it be understood that the Pope will be in the Holy Land and that if Athenagoras is there the two could meet informally.

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