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Brazilian president says pope will visit Rio, Aparecida in July

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Pope Francis
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Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff said Pope Francis confirmed he would be in Rio de Janeiro in July for World Youth Day and, she said, he also told her he intended to visit Brazil's National Shrine of Our Lady of Aparecida.

Jesuit Fr. Federico Lombardi, Vatican spokesman, said the pope and Rousseff spent 15 minutes speaking alone Wednesday before the dozen members of her delegation joined them.

Pope Francis gave the president a copy of Latin American bishops' 2007 Aparecida document, which was drafted during a meeting at the Marian shrine, Lombardi said, but he said Pope Francis' travel plans were not firm and he would release no information about them.

"Invitations (to visit) came from practically every delegation" of government representatives attending Pope Francis' inauguration Tuesday, he said. More than 130 countries sent delegates.

Lombardi said the World Youth Day events in Rio were a primary topic for the pope's talks with Rousseff and that is one visit he does expect the pope to make.

Asked by the Argentine press to comment on the fact that Pope Francis had broadcast a message to people in his hometown before his inauguration, Rousseff said jokingly, "Look, the pope is Argentine, but God is Brazilian."

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