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Pope Francis' friendship with Rabbi Skorka a true interfaith relationship

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NCR Today

On Sunday, I gave a talk to a Jewish congregation in Bethesda, Md. My remarks were mainly focused on interfaith relations, why they are important and where they are heading in the 21st century.

But when I mentioned that Pope Francis seems to be leading the way on this front, it sparked unexpected interest. That was especially true when I said that one of the pope's friends from Argentina is Rabbi Abraham Skorka, with whom he had an extended dialogue that was published earlier this year by Skorka in *On Heaven and Earth*.

But there's more. As I was researching the topic, I found that Rabbi Skorka has spent more than a week at the Vatican as the guest of Pope Francis. They have had breakfast, lunch and dinner together for days. The rabbi celebrated Sukkot, and Pope Francis made sure he had kosher food to eat.

Not only that: Vatican Insider reports that the two are tentatively planning a trip to Israel and Palestine sometime in 2014 to see what they can do together to promote peace in the region.

Now that's interfaith work!

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