

# *Brazilian Religious Leader Frei Betto Says Fidel Castro in Good Health*

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Havana, January 29 (RHC-EFE) – Fidel Castro is in good health and feels “deep admiration” for Pope Francis, Brazilian intellectual Frei Betto said on Wednesday, one day after meeting with the historic leader of the Cuban Revolution.

He and Fidel discussed a wide range of subjects and the 88-year-old leader of the Revolution remains “very optimistic,” Betto told reporters in Havana.

Betto, a founder of Liberation Theology, and Fidel Castro are old friends and the Brazilian is a frequent visitor to Havana, where he traveled this week to address a conference on education.

“(Fidel) asked me about my meeting with Pope Francis. He has a deep admiration for Pope Francis,” the Brazilian said.

Fidel and Betto met a day after the former president's first public statement about the planned restoration of diplomatic relations with Washington, in an open letter to students at the University of Havana. Fidel

said that while he does not trust U.S. policy, he does not oppose the “peaceful resolution” of conflicts or negotiations with Washington, as long as they take place within the framework of international norms.

Betto, whose books include “Fidel and Religion: Conversations with Friar Betto,” said Fidel Castro asked his opinion about Cuba’s budding rapprochement with the United States.

“I said I thought it is very good, very positive. But one side still speaks in FM and the other speaks in AM; getting on the same wavelength will take time,” the Brazilian recounted, adding that he emphasized the thaw between the long-time antagonists “is an important step for peace, a dialogue that has to take place.”

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