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## **Cardinal Parolin: ratification of Accord with Timor-Leste reaffirms the historic and current role of the Catholic Church**

Vatican City, 3 March 2016 – Cardinal Secretary of State Pietro Parolin gave a brief address this morning following the exchange of the instruments of ratification of the Accord between the Holy See and the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste. He recalled his trip to the capital, Dili, as the Holy Father's special envoy for the commemoration of the fifth centenary of the evangelisation of the island, during which the signing of the current Accord took place.

"The Accord, considering the role, both historic and current, carried out by the Catholic Church in the life of the nation and the profound rootedness of the Catholic religion in Timorese society, provides a stable legal framework for relations both between the Holy See and the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste, and between the Catholic Church and the Timorese state", said the cardinal. "It is the fruit of years of negotiations, sustained by a common spirit of dialogue, collaboration and the constant search for the most suitable legal instruments to sanction the recognition on the part of the Timorese state of the service the Catholic Church carries out for the people. This compromise regards both the spiritual dimension and that of education, solidarity, assistance for the weakest and many other activities that contribute in a positive way to the integral growth of this beloved people".