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Briefing by the Director of the Holy See Press Office, Greg Burke, on the 27th Meeting of the Council of Cardinals with the Holy Father Francis

At 1 pm today, the Director of the Holy See Press Office, Greg Burke, gave a briefing on the 27th meeting of the Council of Cardinals with the Holy Father Francis.

The Council of Cardinals met for three days: Monday 10, Tuesday 11 and Wednesday 12 December. The meeting was attended by Their Eminences Cardinal Óscar Rodríguez Maradiaga, S.D.B. ; Cardinal Reinhard Marx; Cardinal Seán Patrick O'Malley, O.F.M. Cap.; Cardinal Giuseppe Bertello; and Cardinal Osvald Gracias. Cardinal Secretary of State Pietro Parolin was not present as he was representing the Holy See at the Intergovernmental Conference for the formal adoption by the United Nations member states of the Global Compact for migrations, which took place in Marrakech, Morocco, from 10 to 11 December. The Holy Father, as usual, took part in the work, even though he was absent this morning for the general audience.

Following the request expressed by the Cardinals at the end of the 26th meeting of the Council of Cardinals (10-12 September 2018), regarding reflection on the work, structure and composition of the Council itself, also taking into account the advanced age of some members, the Holy Father Francis wrote at the end of October to Their Eminences Cardinal George Pell, Cardinal Javier Errázuriz and Cardinal Laurent Monsengwo Pasinya to thank them for the work they have done in these five years. Given the phase of the Council's work, the appointment of new members is not expected at present.

The work sessions took place in the morning from 9.00 to 12.30 and in the afternoon from 16.30 to 19.00. The members of the Council addressed various topics, including the containment of the costs of the Holy See, the meeting with the presidents of the Episcopal Conferences of the Catholic Church on the theme of the "protection of minors", to take place in the Vatican from 21 to 24 February 2019, and the Apostolic Constitution of the Roman Curia. Furthermore, the Cardinals studied issues related to the Dicastery for Communication.

Msgr. Marco Mellino, appointed last October as assistant secretary of the Council of Cardinals to help the Holy Father in the governance of the Universal Church and to study the draft revision of the Pastor Bonus Constitution on the Roman Curia, was introduced to the Cardinals by Pope Francis. A new proposal for the Apostolic Constitution, whose provisional title is *Predicate evangelium*, has been submitted to the Holy Father.

His Eminence Cardinal Reinhard Marx, co-ordinator of the Council for the Economy, addressed the question of the reduction of the operating costs of the Holy See. The highest cost is undoubtedly related to personnel. It was reiterated that there is no plan or intention to proceed with any reductions or redundancies, but it would be necessary to produce job descriptions to make the work of each Dicastery more effective, also assessing the possibility of relocations through mobility, and where possible, early retirement. The sense of responsibility demands a long-term plan to reduce costs, and Cardinal Marx has proposed the development of multi-year budgets so that the Council for the Economy can formulate projections at five and ten years to give a clearer picture of the situation and how to deal with it.

The Cardinals then focused on the next meeting with the Presidents of the Episcopal Conferences on the protection of minors, scheduled for February, strongly reiterating its importance.

The Council of Cardinals heard Dr. Paolo Ruffini, who after illustrating the progress of the reform that created the Dicastery for Communication, focused on the next steps to be carried out to bring it to completion according to the *Motu Proprio* of 27 June 2015, bringing together all the institutions involved and ensuring coordinated management and an increasingly effective collaboration of resources also thanks to new technological tools. The Prefect stressed the value of different media (radio, TV, web, social) in the current multimedia context and the importance of an integrated synergy between them. Dr. Ruffini then illustrated the criteria for ensuring a unified strategy of communication of the Holy See, emphasizing the unique value of the multilingual content of the Vatican media.

Finally, Professor Vincenzo Bonomo, rector of the Pontifical Lateran University and advisor to Vatican City State, informed the Cardinals about the new Law on the Governance of Vatican City State.

The next meeting of the Council of Cardinals will take place on 18, 19 and 20 February 2019.
