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Sommario:

## ◆ UDIENZA AI PARTECIPANTI AL CORSO DI ASTRONOMIA PROMOSSO DALLA SPECOLA VATICANA

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Alle 12.40 di questa mattina, nella Sala del Concistoro, il Santo Padre Benedetto XVI ha ricevuto in Udienza i partecipanti al Corso di Astronomia promosso dalla Specola Vaticana e ha loro rivolto le parole di saluto che riportiamo di seguito:

### ● SALUTO DEL SANTO PADRE

Dear Friends,

I am pleased to greet the faculty and students of the Eleventh Vatican Observatory Summer School, and I thank the Director, Father José Funes, for his kind words of greeting in your name. Since its establishment in 1891, the Vatican Observatory has sought to demonstrate the Church's desire to embrace, encourage and promote scientific study, on the basis of her conviction that "faith and reason are like two wings on which the human spirit rises to the contemplation of truth" (*Fides et Ratio*, Proemium). The Jesuit Fathers and Brothers who staff the Observatory are not only involved in astronomical research, but are also committed to offering educational opportunities for the next generation of astronomers. The Vatican Observatory Summer School is a concrete sign of that commitment.

Your programme this month is devoted to the study of Extrasolar Planets. In addition to your demanding

research, however, you will have a precious opportunity to learn together with students from twenty-two different countries. The wide variety of your backgrounds and cultural traditions can be a source of great enrichment to you all. I encourage you to make the most of this experience, and I offer my prayerful good wishes that your small international community may become a promising sign of greater scientific collaboration for the benefit of the entire human family.

In the days to come, may you find spiritual consolation in the study of the stars that "shine to delight their Creator" (*Bar* 3:34). Upon you and your families I cordially invoke God's blessings of wisdom, joy and peace.

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