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| **NOTE FROM HOLY SEE PRESS OFFICE DIRECTOR ON LEAKED VATICAN DOCUMENTS**  Vatican City, 14 February 2012 (VIS) - Given below is the text of a note written by Holy See Press Office Director Fr. Frederico Lombardi S.J. and released late yesterday afternoon by Vatican Radio, concerning the recent leaking of a series of Vatican documents.  "Nowadays we must all have strong nerves, because no one can be surprised at anything. The American administration was affected by Wikileaks, now the Vatican too has its disclosures, its leaked documents, which tend to create confusion and bewilderment, and to throw a bad light on the Vatican, the governance of the Church and, more broadly, on the Church herself.  "We must, then, remain calm and keep our nerve, make use of reason, something which not all media outlets tend to do. The documents in question are of different kinds and importance, drawn up at various times and for differing situations. One thing is the discussion of the improved economic management of an institution such as the Governorate, which has many different activities; another are notes on current juridical and legislative questions, about which it is quite normal that there should be contrasting opinions; quite another are delirious and incomprehensible reports about plots against the Pope's life. Yet, putting them all together helps to create confusion. Serious reporting should be capable of distinguishing the issues and understanding their differing importance. It is obvious that the economic activities of the Governorate have to be managed wisely and rigorously. It is clear that the IOR and financial activities must be correctly integrated into international anti-recycling norms. These are of course the Pope's instructions. At the same time, it is evident that the story about a plot against the Pope, as I said immediately at the time, is nonsense, madness, and does not deserve to be taken seriously.  "There is something very sad in the fact that documents are dishonestly passed from the inside to the outside in order to create confusion. Both sides bear responsibility: firstly the suppliers of documents of this kind, but also those who undertake to use them for purposes that certainly have nothing to do with pure love of truth. We must, therefore, stand firm, not allowing ourselves to be swallowed up by the vortex of confusion, which is what ill-intentioned people want, and remaining capable of using our reason.  "In a certain sense - according to an ancient expression of human and spiritual wisdom - the emergence of more powerful attacks is a sign that something important is at stake. The series of attacks against the Church on the issue of sexual abuse has been justly met with serious and profound commitment to far-sighted renewal; not a myopic response but purification and rehabilitation. We have now taken control of the situation and are developing a powerful strategy of healing, renewal and prevention, for the good of society as a whole. At the same time, there is a serious commitment to ensure authentic transparency in the working of Vatican institutions, also from an economic perspective. New norms have been issued and channels have been opened for international monitoring. And yet a lot of the recently leaked documents tend to discredit precisely those efforts. This, paradoxically, constitutes another reason to continue them with determination, not allowing ourselves to be cowed. If many people insist on attacking us, the issue is obviously important. Whoever thinks he is discouraging the Pope and his collaborators in their commitment is mistaken.  "As for the issue of the supposed power struggles in view of the next conclave, I would invite everyone to note that all the Pontiffs elected during the last hundred years have been people of exalted and unquestioned spiritual merit. Cardinals have naturally sought, and still seek, to elect someone who deserves the respect of the people of God, someone who can serve humankind in our time with great moral and spiritual authority. Reading these events as an internal power struggle depends to a large extent on the moral coarseness of those who provoke them and those who see them as such, people often incapable of seeing anything else. Fortunately, those who believe in Jesus Christ know that - whatever may be written in today's newspapers - the true concerns of those with positions of responsibility in the Church are the serious problems facing the men and women of today and tomorrow. Not for nothing do we also believe in, and speak of, the assistance of the Holy Spirit". |
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| **OFFICIAL VISIT OF A UNITED KINGDOM MINISTERIAL DELEGATION**  Vatican City, 14 February 2012 (VIS) - A delegation of ministers from the United Kingdom is today beginning an official visit to the Vatican to mark the thirtieth anniversary of the establishment of full diplomatic relations with the Holy See. The delegation is led by Baroness Sayeeda Hussain Warsi representing the prime minister, and includes Archbishop Vincent Nichols of Westminster. Their discussions with Holy See officials will focus on inter-religious dialogue, human rights, the environment, international development and climate change.  This afternoon Baroness Warsi will deliver an address on the place of religion in modern political discourse to staff and students of the Pontifical Ecclesiastical Academy, and to the diplomatic corps accredited to the Holy See. The delegation will be received in audience by the Holy Father tomorrow. |
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| **POPE CONTRIBUTES TO RESTORATION OF THE BASILICA OF ST. AUGUSTINE IN ANNABA, ALGERIA**  Vatican City, 14 February 2012 (VIS) - Benedict XVI is among those contributing to the restoration of the Basilica of St. Augustine in the Algerian town of Annaba, work on which began last year. The church stands on a hill overlooking the ruins of Hippo, the episcopal see of that Father of the Church, and was built early last century, half in the Arab-Moorish style and half in the Romanesque-Byzantine style as a symbol of the universal appeal of the author of the "Confessions".  Speaking on Vatican Radio, Bishop Paul Desfarges S.J. of Constantine-Hippo explained that the Holy Father is making a personal contribution to the restoration work, which is being financed by the authorities in Algeria and France, as well as by a number of institutions, religious orders and benefactors. "The Papal Foundation has contributed, but the Pope has also sent a personal donation", Bishop Desfarges said. "We all know his great respect for St. Augustine. ... The restoration of the basilica means the restoration of a symbol of coexistence and fraternity between the two shores of the Mediterranean, between Christians and Muslims, between the West and Islam, between people who seek the truth". |