

SECRETARIAT OF STATE

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

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From the Vatican, 25 June 2010

Your Eminence/Your Excellency,

The present situation of the faith and the life of the Church in various countries of long-standing Christian tradition cannot but cause serious concern to him whose task it is to strengthen his brothers in the faith (cf. *Lk* 22:32) and to preside over the Church in charity (cf. Saint Ignatius of Antioch, *Letter to the Romans*, Prologue). While on the one hand there are indeed new currents of ecclesial vitality, on the other hand the Christian fabric of society is increasingly threatened by the process of secularization which makes it difficult to hand on the faith. At the same time, there is a growing attempt to relegate religion to the private sphere and it is clear that entire groups of the baptized have lost a sense of the faith and no longer consider themselves part of the Church, leading a life far removed from Christ and from the ecclesial community.

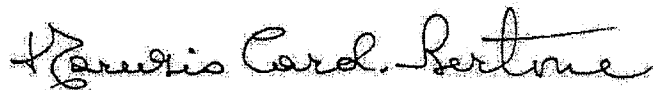
Faced with this situation, the Magisterium has progressively underlined the need for a renewed proclamation of the Gospel, a "new evangelization", in countries where there are Churches of long-standing tradition. It is necessary, in other words, to seek the appropriate means and language to propose God's revelation once more, with renewed missionary zeal, in those places where the first proclamation of the faith has already been made, where indeed it has shaped the local culture and history, but where there is now a kind of "eclipse of the sense of God".

TO THE PRESIDENTS OF EPISCOPAL CONFERENCES

In order to respond to this need and to provide an adequate instrument of assistance, especially for the local Churches, the Holy Father has decided to institute a Pontifical Council for promoting and favouring the new evangelization, and to announce this on 28 June 2010 during the celebration of First Vespers of the Solemnity of Saints Peter and Paul in the Basilica of Saint Paul Outside the Walls, with a view to establishing the new Dicastery formally in the near future.

In communicating this matter confidentially to Your Eminence/Excellency for your information, I assure you of my continued prayers and good wishes.

Yours sincerely in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Tarcisio Card. Bertone". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'T' and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Secretary of State