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Press Release of the Council of Cardinals

On 25 April 2022, in the presence of the Holy Father, the 41st Session of the Council of Cardinals began, the first after the publication of *Praedicate Evangelium*. The meeting was attended by their Eminences Cardinals Giuseppe Bertello, Oscar A. Rodriguez Maradiaga, S.D.B., Reinhard Marx, Sean Patrick O'Malley, O.F.M. Cap., Osvald Gracias, Fridolin Ambongo Besungu, O.F.M. Cap., along with the secretary of the Council, Bishop Marco Mellino. Cardinal Pietro Parolin was absent due to institutional commitments in Mexico.

After the prayer, Cardinal Oscar Maradiaga, coordinator of the Council, addressed a greeting to the Holy Father and the members.

This was followed by a reflection in relation to the war in Ukraine and the consequent sociopolitical, ecclesial and ecumenical situation. The Holy Father referred to various initiatives undertaken by him, the Secretary of State and the Secretariat of State in pursuit of peace. There was then a moment of reflection among the members, who supported and encouraged the Holy Father in his tireless activity for the resolution of the ongoing conflict.

Each cardinal went on to present the sociopolitical and ecclesial situation in his own continent of origin, exploring themes such as: peace, health, poverty, fragile political situations and pastoral problems of the local Churches.

In the session held on the morning of Tuesday 26 April, the Council discussed the theme of climate change and COP27, which will be held in Egypt in November 2022.

In response to the question, "Can we, as a Church, along with other denominations and religions, give a voice to these concerns?", Cardinal Fridolin Ambongo Besungu analyzed the global situation, needs and expectations in relation to COP26 Glasgow, with a special view of the concerns of the poor countries of Asia, Latin America, Africa and Oceania.

In the afternoon session of 26 April, the Council continued its study, initiated during last February's session, on the theme of women in the Church, with a report from a pastoral perspective given by Sr. Laura Vicuña, an indigenous woman from Amazonia (Brazil) belonging to a Congregation of the Franciscan family. This was followed by a debate among the members of the Council and the speaker.

In the session of Wednesday 27 April, reflection continued on the theme of the Diplomatic Service of the Holy See, and the role and activities of Apostolic Nuncios, introduced by a report from Cardinal Osvaldo Gracias, and followed by a debate among the participants.

The final theme considered consisted of the directions for the implementation of the Apostolic Constitution *Praedicate Evangelium* of the Curia Romana, suggesting a possible procedure of actions to accompany the implementation of the new legislation, including an evaluation of the steps taken and the challenges to be taken on.

The meeting ended yesterday with the Regina Caeli prayer. The next appointment was scheduled for the month of June this year.
