SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE
BOLLETTINO
HOLY SEE PRESS OFFICE BUREAU DE PRESSE DU SAINT-SIÈGE PRESSEAMT DES HEILIGEN STUHLS
OFICINA DE PRENSA DE LA SANTA SEDE SALA DE IMPRENSA DA SANTA SÉ
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Press Release on the Seventh Meeting of the Viet Nam – Holy See Joint Working Group (18-20 December 2018)

Implementing the Agreement reached at the Sixth Session of the Viet Nam – Holy See Joint Working Group (October 2016), the Seventh Session of the Joint Working Group took place in Hanoi on 19 December 2018. The Standing Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Viet Nam Bui Thanh Son, Head of the Vietnamese Delegation, and the Undersecretary for Relations with States Antoine Camilleri, Head of the Delegation of the Holy See, co-chaired the Session.

The two sides held a broad and comprehensive discussion on relations between Viet Nam and the Holy See, including matters pertaining to the Catholic Church in Viet Nam.

The two sides noted that relations between Viet Nam and the Holy See have recently witnessed positive developments, particularly the maintenance of regular contacts and consultation at all levels, including high-level meetings as well as exchanges as part of the Viet Nam – Holy See Joint Working Group meetings and ecclesiastical visits to Viet Nam by the Non-Resident Pontifical Representative Archbishop Marek Zalewski.

The two sides agreed that relations between Viet Nam and the Holy See should continue to be maintained based on the mutually agreed principles and fruitful dialogue in order to build confidence and bolster relations in the interest of both sides and of the Catholic community in Viet Nam.

The two sides discussed and reached an agreement on relevant matters towards upgrading relations in the near future between Viet Nam and the Holy See from Non-Permanent Pontifical Representative to Permanent Pontifical Representative. They shared the belief that this step will help relations between the two sides grow and develop further.

The two sides reiterated the Pope's message to the Catholic community in Viet Nam of "Living the Gospel in the heart of the Nation" and "A good Catholic is also a good citizen" as important principles for the life of the Catholic community in Viet Nam.

The Holy See expressed its appreciation and gratitude to the Vietnamese side for the attention that the

Vietnamese authorities have accorded to the Catholic Church in Viet Nam in recent years. The Holy See pays keen attention to the rich and active Catholic life in the country and encourages the Catholic Church in Viet Nam to contribute to the common good and the prosperity of Viet Nam.

The Vietnamese side reiterated that the Vietnamese Party and State are consistently implementing and tirelessly improving the policy framework respecting and ensuring freedom of beliefs and religion of the people; encouraging and facilitating the Catholic community to operate in accordance with Vietnamese law, and to participate actively in national economic and social development and construction.

The two sides also discussed issues concerning the partition of dioceses and the appointment of bishops in Viet Nam.

The Session took place in a cordial and mutually respectful atmosphere.

The two sides agreed to hold the Eighth Session of the Viet Nam – Holy See Joint Working Group in the Vatican. The date of the Session shall be arranged through diplomatic channels.

On this occasion, the Holy See delegation also paid a courtesy call to Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc and the Chairman of the Government Committee on Religious Affairs Vu Chien Thang. The Delegation also attended the installation of the Archbishop of Hanoi, H.E. Msgr. Joseph Vu Van Thien.