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STATEMENTS FROM THE VATICAN REGARDING THE UPCOMING CONCLAVE

Over the weekend, the Vatican Press Office published a communique from the Secretariat of State regarding the Cardinal electors and the upcoming Conclave. In addition, in an amendment concerning the election of the Roman Pontiff, the Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI, stated that “no Cardinal elector can be excluded from active or passive voice in the election of the Supreme Pontiff, for any reason or pretext.”

Following is the communique from the Secretariat of State.

SECRETARIAT OF STATE COMMUNIQUE

Vatican City, 23 February 2013 (VIS) – The freedom of the College of Cardinals, which, by law, is responsible for providing for the election of the Roman Pontiff, has always been strongly defended by the Holy See as the guarantee of a choice based solely on deliberations directed toward the good of the Church.

Over the course of the centuries, Cardinals have had to face many forms of pressures, exerted upon individual electors or upon the College of Cardinals itself, that sought to influence their decisions, following a political or worldly logic.

If in the past the so-called powers, i.e., States, sought to influence the election of the Pope, today there is an attempt to do this through public opinion, which is often based on judgements that do not capture the typically spiritual aspect of this moment that the Church is living.

It is deplorable that, as we draw closer to the moment that the Conclave will begin and the Cardinal electors will be held—in conscience and before God—to freely express their choice, there is a widespread distribution of often unverified, unverifiable, or even completely false news stories that cause serious damage to persons and institutions.

Now as never before, Catholics are focusing on what is essential: praying for Pope Benedict, praying that the Holy Spirit might enlighten the College of Cardinals, and praying for the future Pope, confident that the future of the barque of Peter is in God's hands.