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## **Priestly celibacy: Bruni, “Holy Father’s position is known”**

“The Holy Father’s position on celibacy is known”, said Matteo Bruni, director of the Holy See Press Office, in response to journalists’ questions regarding the book on the priesthood (to be released in France on January 15) signed by Pope Emeritus Joseph Ratzinger and by Card. Robert Sarah, Prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship. “In dialogue with journalists on the flight back from Panama - the Vatican spokesperson recalled -, Pope Francis said: ‘I am reminded of that phrase of Saint Paul VI: ‘I would rather give my life than change the law on celibacy’. And he added: ‘Personally, I think that celibacy is a gift for the Church. I don’t agree with allowing optional celibacy, no. There is room to consider exceptions, but only in remote locations - I think of the Pacific Islands... when there is pastoral need, there, the pastor must think of the faithful’”. “As for the way in which this topic fits into the more general work of the recent Synod on the Pan-Amazon Region and its evangelisation - Bruni remarked -, the Holy Father said at the final session: ‘I was very pleased that we did not fall prisoners of these selective groups who want to see from the Synod only what has been decided on this or that other intra-ecclesiastical point, and deny the body of the Synod, which are the diagnoses we have made in the four dimensions” (pastoral, cultural, social, and ecological).

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