

Remarks Aboard Plane From the Holy Land

Pope Francis

Touching on topics from sex abuse to church finances to his future travels and his own possible retirement, Pope Francis concluded his visit to the Holy Land May 26 with a wide-ranging interview with journalists aboard the papal flight from Tel Aviv to Rome. The pope said he would meet with a group of sex abuse victims for the first time in June and announced plans to visit the Philippines and Sri Lanka in January. He called the sexual abuse of minors "truly a horrible crime" and said no priest or bishop would receive special treatment if accused of such a crime. As a matter of fact, Pope Francis said, three bishops — whom he did not name — are

"On this issue [clerical sex abuse of minors] we need to keep moving forward: zero tolerance."

currently "under investigation" and one has been convicted and is awaiting punishment. He did not make clear if the bishops had been accused of abusing children themselves or of mishandling accusations of abuse by priests. Pope Francis also confirmed an investigation into the reported misappropriation of 15 million euro from the Vatican bank by his former secretary of state, Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, but said "at this time nothing definitive has been established." He expressed exasperation with the fact that some have reduced the theme of the upcoming Synod of Bishops on the family to the simple question of giving Communion to those who have divorced and civilly remarried. "No, the issue is bigger and wider," he said. "Today, as we all know, the family is in crisis; it is in crisis worldwide." Asked whether he might retire at some point, the pope said his predecessor, Pope Benedict XVI, "opened the door. ... Will there be others? God knows." The pope gave the interview in Italian; a Vatican translation of its transcription of the interview follows, copyright © 2014 by Libreria Editrice Vaticana.

father Lombardi: We thank the pope very much for being here. After so exhausting a journey, he has been willing to meet us. So we're very grateful to him.

We have organized ourselves — the journalists worked this out on their own — in some of the major language groups, which will present a few people to ask questions. I have not put any limits on them because I

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