



THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
NEW YORK, NY 10007

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CONTACT: pressoffice@cityhall.nyc.gov, (212) 788-2958
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**RUSH TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO AND AMBASSADOR TO THE HOLY SEE
KENNETH HACKETT HOLD MEDIA AVAILABILITY FOLLOWING MEETING
WITH VATICAN SECRETARY OF STATE CARDINAL PIETRO PAROLIN**

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Buongiorno. I'm here with the Ambassador to the Holy See.

Ambassador Kenneth Hackett: Yes. How do you do.

Question: Hello Ambassador. How was your meeting?

Mayor: The meeting was very positive. And the Secretary of State, an extraordinary man and it was such an honor to spend time with him. And to relate to him how important it would be for the people of New York City to have the Pope visit. We understand no one has a more difficult schedule in the world than the Pope. And nothing definitive was decided in the meeting, but Cardinal Parolin was very open to the request and I emphasized to him, that not just for Catholic New Yorkers in the city and in all of metropolitan New York, but for all New Yorkers, it would be an extraordinary moment for our city and an extraordinary honor if the pope were to visit. Ambassador?

Ambassador Hackett: That's true. I mean, Cardinal Parolin was very generous with his time this morning. He was interested in what the Mayor had to say about the experiences that New York has with immigrants now. The new identification card, that really captured his interest. He's just back himself from Mexico and a big meeting on migration. So, that was substantively one of the things we talked about as well.

Question: What kind of – what happens next in terms of a papal visit? Im sure invitations flood in here on a daily basis, so what are the next steps going forward?

Mayor: Well we've been working with Cardinal Dolan now for months, trying to do all we can to encourage and support a visit. Again, the Pope literally has the most global of schedules so we won't know until a number of other steps are taken. But I think the point is simply to make clear how much enthusiasm there would be in New York City. And how the City of New York would

do everything to accommodate the visit. Obviously we have the advantage of the United Nations being there as well, and that might be appealing to the pope. I think it's an ongoing dialogue until the pope and his staff are able to determine their approach.

Question: Any main political topics that you have talked about with Parolin, since he's basically the foreign affairs minister of the Vatican.

Mayor: He is absolutely it. He is Secretary of State. It's interesting, they say the same phrase we use as Secretary of State. And he plays an incredibly important role, and I'm sure the Ambassador can articulate it better than I. But we spoke a lot about immigration, about the immigration crisis in Central America, now affecting the United States. And of course the church has been a leader in calling for compassion and support and a humanitarian response, as opposed to a political response to the crisis. And I emphasize that New York City agrees with the position of the Holy See, that we have to embrace all immigrants. We've talked about the municipal ID card, we've talked about legal services for people facing deportation. And trying to support these children who are now coming across the border, because they are fleeing from violence. I think the church has been outstanding in acknowledging the human reasons why people immigrate, because they are escaping poverty and violence and that we have to embrace them. So we have – a lot of the conversation was about that. And of course about the broader issue of addressing poverty and income inequality, which as I've always said, the Pope is the leading voice on the Earth in relation to that.

Ambassador Hackett: That's absolutely right. I think it has to be said that it was very important for the mayor to come here to make this request. We've had visits from delegations in Philadelphia, and of course the President came and invited the Holy Father to Washington and to the United States in general. But for the mayor to come specifically to invite the Holy Father to New York City, that was important.

Question: And are you ready to offer shelter to those kids in New York? Are you ready to find some place to offer shelter, like the mayor of Syracuse has been trying to offer shelter to those Central American kids.

Mayor: Right. What we know right now is that so many of the children who are reaching New York are reaching family members in New York, and that's the primary reality. So we have additional services that we have to provide them through their family. And I think that's the central obligation we have right now. And if we do that right, we'll be able to help a lot of these children. Thank you everyone.

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