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## Meeting on Culture and the Balkans

March 21, 2017- Pave the Way Foundation (PTWF) has worked on achieving peace and fellowship in the Balkans since 2006. PTWF regional director for the Balkans, Aleksandar Simić has recently been on a one day visit to the Holy See, meeting various representatives of the Curia, including the Secretary of the State, H.E. Cardinal Parolin and H.E. Cardinal Ravasi, the President of the Pontifical Council for Culture.

The talks with Cardinal Parolin concentrated on the extremely volatile situation in the Western Balkans and the continuous effort of Rome to approach the region with care and responsibility. The necessity of a faster accession of the western Balkans countries into the EU was stressed, as well as the need for all actors on the ground to demonstrate political maturity by allowing the tensions to subside and finding ways to promote dialogue and solidarity. Cardinal Ravasi on the other hand reiterated that cultural understanding is also an important vehicle of unity, and commanded Mr. Simić's work on pieces like Missa Solemnior, composed back in 2004, to commemorate 950 years of the Great Schism and 40 years of Reconciliation between Rome and Constantinople. The messages promoted by this particular work are to be found in the short text, published together with the complete recording of the Mass.

In his short visit, Mr. Simić also met with Father Federico Lombardi, the longest running spokesman for the Holy See and the head of Radio Vatican, now in charge of the Ratzinger Vatican Foundation, as well as with Msgr. Vincenzo Paglia, the head of the Community of Sant'Egidio.



Aleksandar Simic with H.E. Pietro Cardinal Parolin- Secretary of State



Aleksandar With Fr. Lombardi

395 Twin Lane South- Wantagh, NY 11793 +212.629.0046

+516.432.7560 Fax+516.432.7561

[office@ptwf.org](mailto:office@ptwf.org)

[www.ptwf.org](http://www.ptwf.org)