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## Vatican statement on Beirut attack

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NCR Today

Today's bombing in the Christian section of Beirut is of special concern to the Vatican, coming on the heels of Pope Benedict XVI's Sept. 14-16 trip to the nation, which was hailed for lifting up a compelling example of Christian-Muslim harmony. All the main Islamic currents in Lebanon embraced the trip, including Hamas, which festooned Beirut with banners welcoming the pope to the city.

This afternoon the Vatican released a statement on the attack by Jesuit Fr. Federico Lombardi, the Vatican spokesperson. The following is an NCR translation of Lombardi's statement, which comes as a seven-member delegation representing the Synod of Bishops on the New Evangelization is set to depart for neighboring Syria, in part to demonstrate concern for the Christian minority there. Cardinal Timothy Dolan of New York will be part of that delegation.

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Lombardi statement: "The attack in Beirut deserves the firmest condemnation, for the absurd homicidal violence it manifests and because it's contrary to the efforts and commitment to preserving peaceful co-existence in Lebanon. Instead, as Pope Benedict XVI has said many times, Lebanon is called to be a message of peace and hope for those who live there and for the entire region. While sharing with compassion the sorrow for the dead and the wounding of so many people, it's hoped that this horrible event will not be an occasion for the further spread of violence."

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