



## The Holy See

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PRESENTATION OF THE CHRISTMAS GREETINGS TO THE ROMAN CURIA **ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS** *Clementine Hall*

*Thursday, 22 December 2016* [\[Multimedia\]](#)

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*Dear Brothers and Sisters,*

I would like to begin this meeting of ours by offering cordial good wishes to all of you, superiors and officials, papal representatives and staff of the Nunciatures worldwide, all those working in the Roman Curia and your families. Best wishes for a holy and serene Christmas and a happy New Year 2017!

Saint Augustine, contemplating the face of the Baby Jesus, exclaimed: “immense in the form of God, tiny in the form of a slave”.<sup>[1]</sup> To describe the mystery of the Incarnation, Saint Macarius, the fourth-century monk and disciple of Saint Anthony Abbot, used the Greek verb “*smikryno*”, to become small, to reduce to the bare minimum. He says: “Listen attentively: the infinite, unapproachable and uncreated God, in his immense and ineffable goodness has taken a body, and, I dare say, infinitely diminished his glory”.<sup>[2]</sup>

Christmas is thus the feast of the *loving humility of God*, of the God who upsets our logical expectations, the established order, the order of the dialectician and the mathematician. In this upset lies all the richness of God’s own thinking, which overturns our limited human ways of thinking (cf. *Is 55:8-9*). As Romano Guardini said: “What a reversal of all existing values – also divine! In truth, this God destroys everything that man, in the pride of his revolt, constructs of his own inspiration”.<sup>[3]</sup> At Christmas, we are called to say “yes” with our faith, not to the Master of the universe, nor even to the most noble of ideas, but precisely to this God who is *the humble lover*.

Blessed Paul VI, on Christmas 1971, said: “God could have come wrapped in glory, splendour, light and power, to instill fear, to make us rub our eyes in amazement. Instead he came as the smallest, the frailest and weakest of beings. Why? So that no one would be ashamed to approach him, so that no one would be afraid, so that all would feel close to him and draw near him, so that there would be no distance between us and him. God made the effort to plunge, to dive deep within us, so that each of us, each of you, could speak intimately with him, trust him, draw near him and realize that he thinks of you and loves you... *He loves you!* Think about what this means!

If you understand this, if you remember what I am saying, you will have understood the whole of Christianity”.<sup>[4]</sup>

God chose to be born a little child,<sup>[5]</sup> *because he wanted to be loved.*<sup>[6]</sup> Here we see, as it were, how the logic of Christmas is the reversal of worldly logic, of the mentality of power and might, the thinking of the Pharisees and those who see things merely in terms of causality or determinism.

In this gentle yet winning light of the divine countenance of the Christ Child, I have chosen as the theme of this, our yearly meeting, *the reform of the Roman Curia*. It seemed to me right and fitting to share with you the framework of the reform, to point out its guiding principles, the steps taken so far, but above all the logic behind every step already taken and what is yet to come.

Here I spontaneously think of the ancient adage that describes the process of the Spiritual Exercises in the Ignatian method: *deformata reformare, reformata conformare, conformata confirmare et confirmata transformare*.

There can be no doubt that, for the Curia, the word *reform* is to be understood in two ways. First of all, it should make the Curia *con-form* “to the Good News which must be proclaimed joyously and courageously to all, especially to the poor, the least and the outcast”. To make it *con-form* to the signs of our time and to all its human achievements, so as “better to meet the needs of the men and women whom we are called to serve”.<sup>[7]</sup> At the same time, this means *con-forming* the Curia ever more fully to its purpose, which is that of cooperating in the ministry of the Successor of Peter<sup>[8]</sup> (*cum ipso consociatam operam prosequantur*, as the *Motu Proprio Humanam Progressionem* puts it), and supporting the Roman Pontiff in the exercise of his singular, ordinary, full, supreme, immediate and universal power.<sup>[9]</sup>

Consequently, the reform of the Roman Curia must be guided by ecclesiology and directed *in bonum et in servitium*, as is the service of the Bishop of Rome.<sup>[10]</sup> This finds eloquent expression in the words of Pope Saint Gregory the Great, quoted in the third chapter of the Constitution *Pastor Aeternus* of the First Vatican Council: “My honour is that of the whole Church. My honour is the firm strength of my brothers. I am truly honoured when due honour is paid to each and every one”.<sup>[11]</sup>

Since the Curia is not an immobile bureaucratic apparatus, reform is first and foremost a sign of life, of a Church that advances on her pilgrim way, of a Church that is living and for this reason *semper reformanda*,<sup>[12]</sup> in need of reform because she is alive.

Here it must clearly be said that reform is not an end unto itself, but rather a process of growth and above all of *conversion*.

Consequently, the aim of reform is not aesthetic, an effort to improve the looks of the Curia, nor

can it be understood as a sort of facelift, using make-up and cosmetics to embellish its aging body, nor even as an operation of plastic surgery to take away its wrinkles.[13] Dear brothers and sisters, it isn't wrinkles we need to worry about in the Church, but blemishes!

Seen in this light, we need to realize that the reform will be effective only if it is carried out by men and women who are *renewed* and not simply *new*.<sup>[14]</sup> We cannot be content simply with changing personnel; we need to encourage spiritual, human and professional renewal among the members of the Curia. The reform of the Curia is in no way implemented with a change *of* persons – something that certainly is happening and will continue to happen<sup>[15]</sup> – but with a conversion *in* persons. *Continuing formation* is not enough; what we need also and above all is *continuing conversion and purification*. Without a *change of mentality*, efforts at practical improvement will be in vain.<sup>[16]</sup>

That is why, in our last two meetings at Christmas, I discussed certain “diseases”, drawing on the teaching of the Desert Fathers (2014), and compiled, on the basis of the word “mercy”, a *catalogue of virtues* necessary for curial officials and all those who wish their consecration or service to the Church to become more fruitful (2015). The underlying reason is that, as in the case of the Church overall, the *semper reformanda* must also become, in the case of the Curia, an ongoing personal and structural process of conversion.<sup>[17]</sup>

It was necessary to speak of disease and cures because every surgical operation, if it is to be successful, must be preceded by detailed diagnosis and careful analysis, and needs to be accompanied and followed up by precise prescriptions.

In this process, it is normal, and indeed healthy, to encounter difficulties, which in the case of the reform, might present themselves as different types of resistance. There can be cases of *open resistance*, often born of goodwill and sincere dialogue, and cases of *hidden resistance*, born of fearful or hardened hearts content with the empty rhetoric of “spiritual window-dressing” typical of those who say they are ready for change, yet want everything to remain as it was before. There are also cases of *malicious resistance*, which spring up in misguided minds and come to the fore when the devil inspires ill intentions (often cloaked in sheep's clothing). This last kind of resistance hides behind words of self-justification and, often, accusation; it takes refuge in traditions, appearances, formalities, in the familiar, or else in a desire to make everything personal, failing to distinguish between the act, the actor, and the action.<sup>[18]</sup>

The absence of reaction is a sign of death! Consequently, the good cases of resistance – and even those not quite so good – are necessary and merit being listened to, welcomed and their expression encouraged. It is a sign that the body is alive.

All this is to say that the reform of the Curia is a delicate process that has to take place in fidelity to essentials, with constant discernment, evangelical courage and ecclesial wisdom, careful listening,

persevering action, positive silence and firm decisions. It requires much prayer, profound humility, farsightedness, concrete steps forward and – whenever necessary – even with steps backward, with determination, vitality, the responsible exercise of power, unconditional obedience, but above all by abandonment to the sure guidance of the Holy Spirit and trust in his necessary support. Hence, prayer, prayer, prayer...

## **SOME GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF THE REFORM**

These are principally twelve: individualism; pastoral concern; missionary spirit; organizational clarity; improved functioning; modernization; sobriety; subsidiarity; synodality; catholicity; professionalism and gradualism.

### **1. Individual responsibility (*personal conversion*)**

Once again I reaffirm the importance of individual conversion, without which all structural change would prove useless. The true soul of the reform are the men and women who are part of it and make it possible. Indeed, personal conversion supports and reinforces communal conversion.

There is a powerful interplay between personal and communal attitudes. A single person can bring great good to the entire body, but also bring great harm and lead to sickness. A healthy body is one that can recover, accept, reinforce, care for and sanctify its members.

### **2. Pastoral concern (*pastoral conversion*)**

Mindful of the figure of the shepherd (cf. *Ez* 34:16; *Jn* 10:1-21) and recognizing that the Curia is a *community of service*, “it is good for us too, called to be pastors in the Church, to let the face of God the Good Shepherd enlighten us, purify us and transform us, fully renewed, to our mission. That even in our workplaces we may feel, cultivate and practise a sound pastoral sense, especially towards the people whom we meet each day. May no one feel overlooked or mistreated, but everyone experience, here first of all, the care and concern of the Good Shepherd”.<sup>[19]</sup> Behind every paper is a person.

The efforts of all who work in the Curia must be inspired by pastoral concern and a spirituality of service and communion, for this is the antidote to all the venoms of vain ambition and illusory rivalry. Paul VI cautioned that “the Roman Curia should not be a bureaucracy, as some wrongly judge it, pretentious and apathetic, merely legalistic and ritualistic, a training ground of cloaked ambition and veiled antagonism, as others would have it. Rather, it should be a true community of faith and charity, of prayer and of activity, of brothers and sons of the Pope, who carry out their duties respecting one another’s competence and with a sense of collaboration, in order to serve him as he serves his brothers and sons of the universal Church and of the entire world”.<sup>[20]</sup>

### 3. Missionary spirit<sup>[21]</sup> (*Christocentrism*)

As the Council taught, it is the chief aim of all forms of service in the Church to bring the Good News to the ends of the earth.<sup>[22]</sup> For “there are Church structures which can hamper efforts at evangelization, yet even good structures are only helpful when there is a life constantly driving, sustaining and assessing them. Without new life and an authentic evangelical spirit, without the Church’s fidelity to her own calling, any new structure will soon prove ineffective.”<sup>[23]</sup>

### 4. Organizational clarity

On the basis of the principle that all Dicasteries are juridically equal, a clearer organization of the offices of the Roman Curia was needed,<sup>[24]</sup> in order to bring out the fact that each Dicastery has its own areas of competence. These areas of competence must be respected, but they must also be distributed in a reasonable, efficient and productive way. No Dicastery can therefore appropriate the competence of another Dicastery, in accordance with what is laid down by law. On the other hand, all Dicasteries report directly to the Pope.

### 5. Improved functioning

The eventual merging of two or more Dicasteries competent in similar or closely connected matters to create a single Dicastery serves on the one hand to give the latter greater importance (even externally). On the other hand, the closeness and interaction of individual bodies within a single Dicastery contributes to improved functioning (as shown by the two recently created Dicasteries).<sup>[25]</sup>

Improved functioning also demands an ongoing review of roles, the relevance of areas of competence, and the responsibilities of the personnel, and consequently of the process of reassignment, hiring, interruption of work, and also promotions.

### 6. Modernization (updating)

This involves an ability to interpret and attend to “the signs of the times.” In this sense, “we are concerned to make provisions that the Dicasteries of the Roman Curia be suited to the circumstances of our time and adapted to the needs of the universal Church”. <sup>[26]</sup> Such was the request of the Second Vatican Council: “the departments of the Roman Curia should be reorganized in a manner more appropriate to the needs of our time and of different regions and rites, especially in regard to their number, their titles, their competence, their procedures and how they coordinate their activities”.<sup>[27]</sup>

### 7. Sobriety

Here what is called for is a simplification and streamlining of the Curia. This involves the combination or merging of Dicasteries based on their areas of competence; simplification within individual Dicasteries; the eventual suppression of offices no longer responding to contingent needs; the integration into Dicasteries or the reduction of Commissions, Academies, Committees, etc., all in view of the essential sobriety needed for a proper and authentic witness.

## 8. Subsidiarity

This involves the reordering of areas of competence specific to the various Dicasteries, transferring them if necessary from one Dicastery to another, in order to achieve autonomy, coordination and subsidiarity in areas of competence and effective interaction in service.

Here too, respect must be shown for the principles of subsidiarity and clear organization with regard to relations with the Secretariat of State and, within the latter, among its various areas of competence, so that carrying out its proper duties it will be of direct and immediate assistance to the Pope.<sup>[28]</sup> This will also improve coordination between the various sectors of the Dicasteries and Offices of the Curia themselves. The Secretariat of State will be able to carry out its important function precisely in achieving unity, interdependence and coordination between its sections and different sectors.

## 9. Synodality

The work of the Curia must be synodal, with regular meetings of Heads of the Dicasteries presided over by the Roman Pontiff;<sup>[29]</sup> regularly scheduled Audiences of Heads of the Dicasteries with the Pope, and the customary interdicasterial meetings. The reduced number of Dicasteries will allow for more frequent and systematic meetings of individual Prefects with the Pope and productive meetings of Heads of Dicasteries, since this cannot be the case when groups are too large.

Synodality<sup>[30]</sup> must also be evident in the work of each Dicastery, with particular attention being given to the Congress and at least more frequent Ordinary Sessions. Each Dicastery must avoid the fragmentation caused by factors such as the multiplication of specialized sectors, which can tend to become self-referential. Their coordination must be the task of the Secretary, or the Undersecretary.

## 10. Catholicity

Among the Officials, in addition to priests and consecrated persons, the catholicity of the Church must be reflected in the hiring of personnel from throughout the world, and of permanent deacons and lay faithful carefully selected on the basis of their unexceptionable spiritual and moral life and their professional competence. It is fitting to provide for the hiring of greater numbers of the lay faithful, especially in those Dicasteries where they can be more competent than clerics or

consecrated persons. Also of great importance is an enhanced role for women and lay people in the life of the Church and their integration into roles of leadership in the Dicasteries, with particular attention to multiculturalism.

## 11. Professionalism

Each Dicastery must adopt a policy of continuing formation for its personnel, to avoid their falling into a rut or becoming stuck in a bureaucratic routine.

Likewise essential is the *definitive* abolition of the practice of *promoveatur ut amoveatur*. This is a cancer.

## 12. Gradualism (discernment)

Gradualism has to do with the necessary discernment entailed by historical processes, the passage of time and stages of development, assessment, correction, experimentation, and approvals *ad experimentum*. In these cases, it is not a matter of indecisiveness, but of the flexibility needed to be able to achieve a true reform.

### STEPS ALREADY TAKEN<sup>[31]</sup>

I will now mention briefly and concisely some steps already taken to implement these guiding principles and the recommendations made by the Cardinals in the plenary meetings before the Conclave, by the COSEA, by the Council of Cardinals (C9), and by the Heads of the Dicasteries and other experts and individuals:

- On 13 April 2013 it was announced that the Council of Cardinals (*Consilium Cardinalium Summo Pontifici*) – the C8 and, after 1 July 2014, the C9 – was created, primarily to counsel the Pope on the governance of the universal Church and on other related topics,<sup>[32]</sup> and with the specific task of proposing the revision of the Apostolic Constitution *Pastor Bonus*.<sup>[33]</sup>

- With the Chirograph of 24 June 2013, the Pontifical Commission for Reference on the Institute for Works of Religion was established, in order to study the legal status of the IOR and to enable its greater "harmonization" with "the universal mission of the Apostolic See". This was "to ensure that economic and financial activities be permeated by Gospel principles" and to achieve a complete and acknowledged transparency in its operation.

- With the Motu Proprio of 11 July 2013, provisions were made to define the jurisdiction of the judicial authorities of Vatican City State in criminal matters.

- With the Chirograph of 18 July 2013, the COSEA (Pontifical Commission for Reference on the

Organization of the Economic-Administrative Structure)[34] was instituted and charged with research, analysis and the gathering of information, in cooperation with the Council of Cardinals for the study of the organizational and economic problems of the Holy See.

- With the Motu Proprio of 8 August 2013, the Holy See's Financial Security Committee was established, for the prevention and countering of money laundering, the financing of terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. This was to bring the IOR and the entire Vatican economic system to the regular adoption of, and fully committed and diligent compliance with, all international legal norms on financial transparency.[35]
- With the Motu Proprio of 15 November 2013, the Financial Intelligence Authority (FIA),[36] established by Benedict XVI with his Motu Proprio of 30 December 2010 for the prevention and countering of illegal activities in the area of monetary and financial dealings,[37] was consolidated.
- With the Motu Proprio 24 February 2014 (*Fidelis Dispensator et Prudens*), the Secretariat for the Economy and the Council for the Economy[38] were established to replace the Council of 15 Cardinals, with the task of harmonizing the policies of control in regard to the economic management of the Holy See and the Vatican City.
- With the same Motu Proprio of 24 February 2014, the Office of Auditor General (URG) was established as a new agency of the Holy See, charged with auditing the Dicasteries of the Roman Curia, the institutions connected with to the Holy See or associated with it, and the administrations of the Governatorate of Vatican City.[39]
- With the Chirograph of 22 March 2014, the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors was established, "to promote the protection of the dignity of minors and vulnerable adults, using the forms and methods, consonant with the nature of the Church, which they consider most appropriate".
- With the Motu Proprio of 8 July 2014, the Ordinary Section of the Administration of the Patrimony of the Apostolic See was transferred to the Secretariat for the Economy.
- On 22 February 2015, the Statutes of the new economic agencies were approved.
- With the Motu Proprio of 27 June 2015, the Secretariat for Communication was established and charged "to respond to the current context of communication, characterized by the presence and evolution of digital media, and by factors of convergence and interactivity". The Secretariat was also charged with overall restructuring, through a process of reorganization and merging of "all the realities which in various ways up to the present have dealt with communications", so as to "respond ever better to the needs of the mission of the Church".



- On 6 September 2016, the Statutes of the Secretariat for Communication were promulgated; these took effect last October.[\[40\]](#)

With the two Motu Proprios of 15 August 2015, provisions were made for the reform of the canonical process in cases of declaration of marital nullity: *Mitis et Misericors Iesus* for the Code of Canons of the Oriental Churches, and *Mitis Iudex Dominus Iesus* for the Code of Canon Law.[\[41\]](#)

- With the Motu Proprio of 4 June 2016 (*Come una madre amorevole*), an effort was made to prevent negligence on the part of bishops in the exercise of their office, especially with regard to cases of the sexual abuse of minors and vulnerable adults.

- With the Motu Proprio of 4 July 2016 (*I beni temporali*), following the important principle that agencies of oversight should be separate from those overseen, the respective areas of competence of the Secretariat for the Economy and of the Administration of the Patrimony of the Apostolic See were better defined.

- With the Motu Proprio of 15 August 2016 (*Sedula Mater*), the Dicastery for Laity, the Family and Life was established, in the light of the general pastoral purpose of the Petrine ministry: "I hasten to arrange all things necessary in order that the richness of Christ Jesus may be poured forth appropriately and profusely among the faithful".

- With the Motu Proprio of 17 August 2016 (*Humanam progressionem*), the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development was established, so that development can take place "by attending to the inestimable goods of justice, peace and the care of creation". Beginning in January 2017, four Pontifical Councils - Justice and Peace, *Cor Unum*, Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People, and Healthcare Workers – will be merged into this Dicastery. For the time being, I will directly head the section for the pastoral care of migrants in the new Dicastery.[\[42\]](#)

- On 18 October 2016, the Statutes of the Pontifical Academy for Life were approved.

Our meeting today began by speaking of the meaning of Christmas as the reversal of our human criteria, in order to emphasize that the heart and centre of the reform is Christ (*Christocentrism*).

I would like to conclude simply with a word and a prayer. The word is to reiterate that Christmas is the feast of *God's loving humility*. As the prayer I have chosen the Christmas message of Father Matta el Meskin, a monk of our time, who, addressing the Lord Jesus born in Bethlehem, said: "If for us the experience of (your) infancy is so difficult, it is not so for you, O Son of God. If we stumble along the way that leads to communion with you because of your smallness, you are capable of removing all the obstacles that prevent us from doing this. We know that you will not be at peace until you find us in your likeness and with this (same) smallness. Allow us today, O Son of God, to draw dear to your heart. Grant that we may not consider ourselves great in our

experiences. Grant us instead to become small like you, so that we can draw near to you and receive from you abundant humility and meekness. Do not deprive us of your revelation, the epiphany of your infancy in our hearts, so that with it we can heal all our pride and all our arrogance. We greatly need... for you to reveal in us your simplicity, by drawing us, and indeed the Church and the whole world, to yourself. Our world is weary and exhausted, because everyone is vying to see who is the greatest. There is a ruthless competition between governments, churches, peoples, within families, from one parish to another: Who of us is the greatest? The world is festering with painful wounds because of this great illness: Who is the greatest? But today we have found in you, O Son of God, our one medicine. We, and the whole world, will not find salvation or peace unless we go back to encounter you anew in the manger of Bethlehem. Amen.<sup>[43]</sup>

Thank you, and I wish you a Holy Christmas and a Blessed New Year 2017!

Two years ago, when I spoke of illnesses, one of you came up and asked me: “Where do I have to go... to the pharmacy or to confession?”. “Well... both!”, I replied. And when I greeted Cardinal Brandmüller, he looked me in the eye and said: “Acquaviva!” At the time, I didn’t understand, but, later, thinking about it, I recalled that Acquaviva, the fifth Father General of the Society of Jesus, had written a book that we students read in Latin. The spiritual directors made us read it and it was entitled: *Industriae pro Superioribus ejusdem Societatis ad curandos animae morbos*, that is, on curing illnesses of the soul. Three months ago, a very good edition came out in Italian, done by the late Father Giuliano Raffo, with a good introduction. It is not a critical edition, but it is a very fine translation, very well done, and I believe it could be helpful. As a Christmas gift, I would like to give it to each of you. Thank you. [Blessing].

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[1] *Sermo* 187,1: PL 38, 1001: “*Magnus dies angelorum, parvus in die hominum ... magnus in forma Dei, brevis in forma servi*”.

[2] *Hom.* IV, 9: PG 34, 480.

[3] *The Lord*, Washington, D.C., 2014, 381.

[4] Homily of 25 December 1971.

[5] Cf. SAINT PETER CHRYSOLOGUS, *Sermo* 118: PL 52, 617.

[6] Saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus, who was in love with the littleness of Jesus, wrote in her last letter (of 25 August 1897, addressed to a priest who was entrusted to her as a “spiritual brother”): “I cannot fear a God who made himself so little for me! I love him! Indeed he is nothing but love

and mercy” (LT 266).

[7] Cf. *Apostolic Letter issued Motu Proprio instituting the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development*, 17 August 2016.

[8] The Roman Curia has the function of assisting the Pope in his daily governance of the Church, that is, in his specific tasks. These are: (a) to keep all the faithful “united in the bond of one faith and one charity”, and also “in the oneness of faith and communion”, and (b) “so that the episcopate also might be one and undivided” (cf. FIRST VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, Dogmatic Constitution *Pastor Aeternus*, Prologue). “This Sacred Council, following closely in the footsteps of the First Vatican Council, with that Council teaches and declares that Jesus Christ, the eternal Shepherd, established his holy Church, having sent forth the apostles as he himself had been sent by the Father (cf. *Jn 20:21*), and he willed that their successors, namely the bishops, should be shepherds in his Church even to the consummation of the world. And in order that the episcopate itself might be one and undivided, he placed Blessed Peter over the other apostles, and instituted in him a permanent and visible source and foundation of unity of faith and communion (*Lumen Gentium 18*).

[9] The Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, speaking of the Roman Curia, explains that “in exercising supreme, full, and immediate power in the universal Church, the Roman Pontiff makes use of the departments of the Roman Curia which, therefore, perform their duties in his name and with his authority for the good of the churches and in the service of the sacred Pastors” (*Christus Dominus*, 9). In this way, it reminds us that the Curia is foremost a body which assists the Pope, while explaining that the service offered by the offices of the Roman Curia is always done *in the name of and with the authority of the same Roman Pontiff*. For this reason, the activity of the Curia is carried out *for the good of the Churches and in service of the sacred Pastors*; its activity is thus directed both towards the good of the particular Churches and in support of their Bishops. The particular Churches are “fashioned after the model of the universal Church, in and from which Churches comes into being the one and only Catholic Church” (*Lumen Gentium*, 23).

[10] PAUL VI, *Address to the Roman Curia*, 21 September 1963: “For that matter, this harmony between the Pope and his Curia has been a constant rule. Not only at great times in history is that harmony and its power revealed, but daily, in every act of the papal ministry, as befits the organ of immediate fidelity and absolute obedience employed by the Roman Pontiff in carrying out his universal mission. This essential relationship of the Roman Curia with the exercise of the Pope’s apostolic activity is the justification, and indeed the glory, of the Curia itself. That very relationship demonstrates its necessity, its usefulness, its dignity and its authority. Indeed, the Roman Curia is the means which the Pope needs and uses to carry out his divine mandate. A means which is most worthy, of which it is no wonder that all, and Ourselves first, demand and expect so much! Its functioning calls for professional ability and lofty virtues, precisely because its charge is so lofty. A most delicate task, which is that of being the guardian or echo of the divine truths and speaking in

dialogue with all men and women. An immense task, whose frontiers are the universal *orbis*. A most noble task, which is that of hearing and interpreting the Pope's voice, while ensuring that he lacks no useful and objective information, no filial and well-considered counsel".

[11] *Letter to Eulogius of Alexandria, Ep. 30*: PL 77, 933. The Roman Curia "draws its existence and competence from the Pastor of the universal Church. For the Curia exists and operates only insofar as it has a relation to the Petrine ministry and is based on it" (John Paul II, *Pastor Bonus*, Introduction, No. 7; cf. article 1)

[12] History shows that the Roman Curia has been in a state of continuous "reform", at least in the last hundred years. "The reform announced on 13 April 2013 by the press statement of the Secretariat of State is the fourth of those beginning with that of Saint Pius X with the Constitution *Sapienti Consilio* of 1908. That reform was certainly made more urgent on account of the revision of canon law then taking place, but even more so by the end of the temporal power. It was followed by that of Paul VI in 1967, with *Regimini Ecclesiae Universae*, following the Second Vatican Council. The same Pope had called for a review of the text following a period of experimentation. The 1988 Constitution *Pastor Bonus* of Saint John Paul II generally followed the structure of the Pauline schema, but added a different classification of the various offices and their areas of competence in harmony with the 1983 Code of Canon Law. Within these fundamental transitions, other important interventions took place. Benedict XV, for example, created and the Congregation for Seminaries (previously a section within the Consistorial Congregations) and Universities (1915), and the Congregation for the Oriental Churches (1917; previously it had been established as a section in the Sacred Congregation *de Propaganda Fide*). John Paul II made organizational changes in the Curia even after *Pastor Bonus*, and significant steps were taken by Benedict XVI: e.g., the establishment of the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of the New Evangelization (2010); the transfer of competence over seminaries from the Congregation for Catholic Education to the Congregation for the Clergy, and over catechesis from the latter to the Pontifical Council for the New Evangelization (2013). There were also moves towards simplification made over the years and some active to the present, with the unification of several Dicasteries under a single President" (MARCELLO SEMERARO, *La Riforma di Papa Francesco*, II Regno, LXI, n. 1240, 15 July 2016, pp. 433-441).

[13] In this regard, Paul VI, addressing the Roman Curia on 21 September 1963, stated: "It is understandable that this organization feels the weight of its own venerable age. This is seen in the disparity between its offices and practices with regard to the needs and usages of the present time, and its recognition of the need for simplification and decentralization, as well as expansion and the assumption of new tasks".

[14] Paul VI, on 22 February 1975, during the Jubilee of the Roman Curia, stated: "We are the Roman Curia ... this awareness, which we want to be most clear not only in its canonical definition, but also in its moral and spiritual content, demands that each of us make a penitential

act consonant with the discipline of the Jubilee. An act of self-criticism, we might say, to verify if, in the depths of our heart, our conduct is congruent with the office entrusted to us. We are encouraged to make this interior examination above all by the need for consistency in our ecclesial life, but also by the scrutiny we receive from both the Church and society, albeit at times excessive and lacking in objectivity. It is all the more severe because of what we represent, for we are called always to be exemplary in upholding our ideals... Two spiritual sentiments will thus give meaning and value to our Jubilee celebration: a sentiment of sincere humility, which means being truthful about ourselves, declaring ourselves the first to need God's mercy (*Insegnamenti di Paolo VI*, XIII [1975], pp. 172-176).

[15] In this sense, the succession of generations is part of life, and woe to us if we think or live heedless of this truth. Hence, a change of persons is normal, necessary and to be hoped for.

[16] Benedict XVI, addressing the Curia on 20 December 2010 and drawing inspiration from a vision of Saint Hildegard of Bingen, recalled that the very face of the Church can be "stained with dust" and "her garment torn". I too have noted that healing "comes about through an awareness of our sickness and of a personal and communal decision to be cured by patiently and perseveringly accepting the remedy" (*Address to the Roman Curia*, 22 December 2014).

[17] It is a matter of seeing reform as *transformation*, that is, a move forward, an improvement: *mutare/commutare in melius*.

[18] Cf. Homily, *Domus Sanctae Marthae* 1 December 2016.

[19] *Homily for the Jubilee of the Roman Curia*, 22 February 2016; cf. *Address for the Beginning of the Consistory*, 12 February 2015.

[20] PAUL VI, *Address to the Roman Curia*, 21 September 1963.

[21] "The task of evangelizing all people constitutes the essential mission of the Church. It is a task and mission which the vast and profound changes of present-day society make all the more urgent. Evangelizing is in fact the grace and vocation proper to the Church, her deepest identity. She exists in order to evangelize... For the Christian community is never closed in upon itself. The intimate life of this community – the life of prayer, listening to the Word and the Apostles' teaching, charity lived in a fraternal way, the sharing of bread – this intimate life only acquires its full meaning when it becomes a witness, when it evokes admiration and conversion, and when it becomes the preaching and proclamation of the Good News. Thus it is the whole Church that receives the mission to evangelize, and the work of each individual member is important for the whole." (cf. ID., *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 14-15). "We cannot passively and calmly wait in our church buildings; we need to move from a pastoral ministry of mere conservation to a decidedly missionary pastoral ministry" (*Evangelii Gaudium*, 15).

[22] We must not lose the impetus towards proclamation to those who are far from Christ, because this is the first task of the Church (cf. JOHN PAUL II, *Redemptoris Missio*, 34).

[23] Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, 26. “I dream of a missionary impulse [that is, a *paradigmatic mission*] capable of transforming everything, so that the Church’s customs, ways of doing things, times and schedules, language and structures [that is, a *programmatically mission*] can be suitably channeled for the evangelization of today’s world rather than for her self-preservation” (*Evangelii Gaudium*, 27). In this sense, “what makes obsolete structures pass away, what leads to a change of heart in Christians, is precisely *missionary spirit*”, for “the programmatic mission, as its name indicates, consists in a series of missionary activities; the paradigmatic mission, on the other hand, involves setting in a missionary key all the day-to-day activities of the Particular Churches” (*Address to the Leadership of the Episcopal Conferences of Latin America*, 28 July 2013).

[24] Cf. PAUL VI, Apostolic Constitution *Regimini Ecclesiae Universae*, art. 1, §2; JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic Constitution *Pastor Bonus* art. 2, §2.

[25] “From Rome today comes the invitation to *aggiornamento*, ‘updating’... that is, the refinement of everything, within and without, in the Church. Papal Rome today is quite another thing, and, by God’s grace, so much more worthy, more sage and more holy; so much more conscious of its evangelical vocation, so much more engaged in its Christian mission, so much more desirous, and thus open, to perennial renewal” (PAUL VI, *Address to the Roman Curia*, 21 September 1963).

[26] Motu Proprio *Sedula Mater*, 17 August 2016.

[27] Decree *Christus Dominus*, 9.

[28] Foremost among the duties of the Secretary of State, as the first collaborator of the Pope in the exercise of his supreme mission and as executor of the decisions made by the Pope with the assistance of the consultative bodies, should be the periodic and frequent meetings with Heads of Dicastery. In any event, coordination and cooperation of the Dicasteries among themselves and with other Offices is of utmost importance.

[29] Cf. JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic Constitution *Pastor Bonus*, 22.

[30] A synodal Church is a listening Church (cf. *Address for the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Establishment of the Synod of Bishops*, 17 October 2015; Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, 171). Stages of such listening for the reform of the Curia were: 1) the gathering of opinions in the summer of 2013: from the Heads of Dicasteries and others, from the Cardinals of the Council, and from individual Bishops and Bishops’ Conferences in their respective territories; 2) the 10 September 2013 and 24 November 2014 meetings of Heads of Dicasteries; 3) the Consistory of 12-13 February 2015; 4) the 17 September 2014 Letter of the Council of Cardinals to

Heads of Dicasteries for eventual “decenterings”; 5) Interventions of individual Heads of Dicastery at meetings of the Council of Cardinals regarding proposals and opinions for the reform of individual Dicasteries (cf. MARCELLO SEMERARO, *La Riforma di Papa Francesco*, Il Regno, pp. 433-441).

[31] For a better knowledge of the steps taken, and the reasons and aims of the reform process, particular reference can be made to the three Apostolic Letters issued Motu Proprio, whereby provisions have been made for the creation, variation and suppression of some Dicasteries of the Roman Curia.

[32] The pace of the work involved the members of the Council in a total of 93 meetings, morning and afternoon.

[33] The working sessions of the Council have presently been more than sixteen (on average, one every two months), as follows: 1st session, 1-3 October 2013; 2nd session, 3-5 December 2013; 3rd session, 17-19 February 2014; 4th session, 28-30 April 2014; 5th session, 1-4 July 2014; 6th session, 15-17 September 2014; 7th session, 9-11 December 2014; 8th session, 9-11 February 2015; 9th session, 13-15 March 2015; 10th session, 8-10 June 2015; 11th session, 14-16 September 2015; 12th session, 20-12 December 2015, 13th session, 8-9 February 2016, 14th session, 11-13 April 2016; 15th session, 6-8 June 2016, 16th session, 12-14 September 2016; 17th session, 12-14 December 2016.

[34] Established on 18 July 2013 and suppressed on 22 May 2014, with the task of offering technical support of specialist advice and developing strategic solutions for improvement, so as to avoid the misuse of economic resources, to improve transparency in the processes of purchasing goods and services, to refine the administration of goods and real estate. Also, to work with ever greater prudence in the financial sphere, to ensure correct application of accounting principles, and to guarantee health care and social security benefits to all those eligible. All this, “with the aim of a simplification and rationalization of the existing bodies and a more careful planning of the economic activities of all the Vatican Administrations” (*Chirograph* of 18 July 2013).

[35] For example, the recommendations made by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF). Today the activity of the IOR is in full compliance with the norms aimed at countering money-laundering and the financing of terrorism presently in force in the Vatican City State.

[36] The FIA “is an institution connected to the Holy See” that “shall perform, in full autonomy and independence, the following functions: a) prudential supervision and regulation of those entities that carry out professionally a financial activity; b) supervision and regulation for the prevention and countering of money laundering and financing of terrorism; c) financial intelligence. (*Statutes*, Chapter I, art. 1, par. 1).

[37] The FIA was also established to renew the Holy See's commitment to adopting the principles and employing the juridical instruments developed in the international community, further adapting the institutional structure with the goal of preventing and countering money-laundering, the financing of terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

[38] The Council for the Economy exercises "oversight for the administrative and financial structures and activities of the Dicasteries of the Roman Curia, the institutions linked to the Holy See, and the Vatican City State (*Motu Proprio Fidelis Dispensator et Prudens*, 1).

[39] "The Office of Auditor General operates in complete autonomy and independence in accordance with current legislation and its own Statutes, reporting directly to the Supreme Pontiff. It submits to the Council for the Economy an annual programme of auditing as well as an annual report on its own activities. The aim of the auditing programme is to determine the more significant areas of management and organization potentially at greatest risk". The Office of Auditor General is the institution responsible for auditing the Dicasteries of the Roman Curia, the institutions linked with the Holy See, and the Vatican City State. The activity of the Office aims at providing independent professional assessments with regard to the adequacy of accounting and administrative procedures (*system of internal control*) and their effective application (*compliance audit*). It also assesses the reliability of the budgets of individual Dicasteries and the consolidated budget (*financial audit*) and the regular use of financial and material resources (*value for money audit*).

[40] "The current context of communication, characterized by the presence and development of digital media, by factors of convergence and interaction, demands both a rethinking of the Holy See's information system and a commitment to a reorganization which, while appreciating what has been developed historically within the framework of communications of the Apostolic See, moves towards a unified integration and management" (Statutes of the Secretariat for Communication, Preamble).

[41] With the *Motu Proprio* of 31 May 2016 *De Concordia inter Codices* some norms of the Code of Canon Law were changed.

[42] "This Dicastery will be competent particularly in issues regarding migrants, those in need, the sick, the excluded and marginalized, the imprisoned and the unemployed, as well as victims of armed conflict, natural disasters and all forms of slavery and torture, and others whose dignity is endangered".

[43] *L'umanità di Dio*, Qiqajon, Magnano, 2015, 183-184.

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