NATIONAL CATHOLIC REPORTER
Published on *National Catholic Reporter* (http://ncronline.org)

Vatican claims no tie to latest financial scandal

John L. Allen Jr. | Jan. 31, 2012 NCR Today

Distancing itself from yet another financial scandal, the Vatican this morning insisted that an Italian cleric who allegedly invested some $2 million in a ponzi scheme run by an Italian financier known as the ?Madoff of Parioli? is not, in fact, a Vatican official, and thus the Vatican has nothing to do with the story.

Italy?s leading daily newspaper, *Corriere della Sera*, carried a story in its Jan. 31 edition, under the headline ?From the Congregation for the Causes of Saints: 1.6 million for the Madoff of Parioli.? In essence, the story implied that the Vatican's department for saints was involved because an Italian cleric who got caught up in the swindle, Dominican Fr. Francesco Maria Ricci, is responsible for various sainthood causes for the Dominicans and therefore interacts with the Vatican.

tThe story reports that the Dominican, Ricci, had invested slightly over $2 million in a financial services operation run by financier Gainfranco Lande, who was arrested last April and charged with several counts of fraud. At this stage, Lande?s ponzi scheme is estimated to have wiped out the savings of a roster of elite Roman investors to the tune of roughly $300 million.

tThe details on Ricci?s investment emerged from an on-going civil investigation of Lande by Italian prosecutors. The story did not clarify where Ricci got the $2 million he invested with Lande.

tBecause Ricci is a ?postulator,? meaning an official responsible for sainthood causes for his religious order, the story seemed to speculate that Ricci might have been acting in a quasi-official Vatican capacity when he invested in Lande?s financial services company.

tThis morning, however, the Vatican spokesperson, Jesuit Fr. Federico Lombardi, denied that Ricci has any Vatican status. The following is the full text of Lombardi?s statement, in an NCR translation.

* * *

DECLARATION OF THE DIRECTOR OF THE PRESS OFFICE OF THE HOLY SEE, FR. FEDERICO LOMBARDI S.J.

Responding to questions from journalists with regard to the article published by Corriere della Sera this morning, Jan. 31, with the headline, ?From the Congregation of Saints, 1.6 million to the ?Madoff of Parioli,? the Director of the Press Office of the Holy See, Fr. Federico Lombardi S.J., has clarified the following:

The Rev. Francesco Maria Ricci, who is spoken on in the article, is a religious of the Dominicans, who works on behalf of his Order.
He does not belong in any to the Congregation for the Causes of Saints. In fact, it?s important to note that postulations and postulators are ?clients? of the Congregation, to which they address themselves to promote their causes, but they absolutely are not part of the Congregation.
Therefore, it must be underscored that the Congregation for the Causes of Saints and its Prefect, Cardinal

Angelo Amato, have absolutely nothing to do with the events spoken of in the article in question.

Source URL (retrieved on *07/12/2014 - 09:41*): http://ncronline.org/blogs/ncr-today/vatican-claims-no-tie-latest-financial-scandal