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Pope names bishop once accused of improprieties to Vatican council

Carol Glatz Catholic News Service | Mar. 22, 2012

VATICAN CITY -- Pope Benedict XVI has appointed a German bishop who had been accused of financial irregularities and hitting children to the Vatican's health care council.

Retired Bishop Walter Mixa of Augsburg was named a member of the Pontifical Council for Health Care Ministry on Wednesday.

It is the 70-year-old bishop's first appointment as a member of a Vatican dicastery. He served as the bishop of Augsburg and the German Military Ordinariate until he resigned in 2010.

Mixa's resignation was accepted a few weeks after he offered it, after accusations surfaced that he had hit children during his time as a priest in charge of a children's home near Augsburg. He originally denied the claims, then admitted that he had perhaps "boxed the ears" of some of his wards.

Mixa also faced accusations of misappropriation of funds from the children's home.

German prosecutors also investigated Mixa for alleged sexual abuse of a minor when he was bishop of Eichstatt from 1996 to 2005, but dropped the investigation for lack of evidence.

Pope Benedict met with Mixa after his resignation in a private audience at the Vatican in 2010. After the closed-door meeting, the Vatican said the bishop would "retreat for a period of silence, contemplation and prayer."

After a period of "treatment and reconciliation," the Vatican had said the bishop would be available for pastoral work authorized by his successor, Bishop Konrad Zdarsa.

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