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Pope names retired cardinals to investigate source of leaks to media

Carol Glatz Catholic News Service | Apr. 25, 2012

VATICAN CITY -- Pope Benedict XVI named the members of a papal commission he established in March to investigate a series of leaks of letters exchanged among Vatican officials and between the officials and the pope himself.

Spanish Cardinal Julian Herranz, 82, a former president of the Pontifical Council for the Interpretation of Legislative Texts, will lead the commission. The two other members are 88-year-old retired Slovakian Cardinal Jozef Tomko, prefect emeritus of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples; and the retired archbishop of Palermo, Cardinal Salvatore De Giorgi, 81.

The commission of cardinals "will act at all levels on the strength of its pontifical mandate" to investigate the "recent leaks of reserved and confidential documents on television, in newspapers and in other communications media" and "bring these episodes fully to light," said a Vatican press release Wednesday.

The commission met for the first time Tuesday, the statement said, "to establish the method and timetable for its activities."

A Vatican tribunal was to look into taking legal action against those who gave the documents to reporters, and the Vatican Secretariat of State was to carry out an administrative review of every Vatican office.

While some of the leaked letters are gossipy, others include allegations of serious financial misconduct.

The leaks being investigated by the Vatican began in January with the publication of letters written by Archbishop Carlo Maria Vigano when he was secretary-general of the Governor's Office of Vatican City State. The archbishop, who now is nuncio to the United States, warned of corruption, abuse of power, a lack of transparency in awarding contracts and opposition to financial reforms.

Later leaks included a letter from a Vatican official questioning the current reform of the Vatican's finance laws and letters from Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, Vatican secretary of state, and Cardinal Dionigi Tettamanzi of Milan arguing over control of a Catholic hospital.

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