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# Pope Francis taps eight cardinals to lead Vatican reform

John L. Allen Jr. | Apr. 13, 2013 NCR Today
Pope Francis

In a signal that major reform may be on the horizon, the Vatican announced Saturday that Pope Francis has formed a group of eight cardinals from around the world to "advise him on the government of the universal church" and "to study a project of revision" of a document from John Paul II on the Roman Curia.

At first blush, all these cardinals seem like strong personalities. Several have voiced criticisms over the years about various aspects of Vatican operations, while two, Cardinal Sean O'Malley of Boston and Cardinal Reinhard Marx of Munich, have played key roles in the church's response to the child sexual abuse crisis.

The group's first meeting is set for Oct. 1-3, and meanwhile, according to the Vatican statement, the pope will be in regular contact with the cardinals individually.

The brief item in the Vatican's daily press bulletin did not explain how these cardinals were chosen or how long they will serve in these roles.

Strikingly, there was only one member of the Roman Curia among the eight cardinals tapped to assist the pope. The rest come from various parts of the world, with at least one representing each continent.

The note said Pope Francis had assembled the group in keeping with a suggestion that emerged during the "General Congregation" meetings of cardinals in the run-up to the conclave that elected him to the papacy.

As it happens, Saturday was the one-month anniversary of Francis' election.

The cardinals named to this new role are:

- Cardinal Giuseppe Bertello of Italy, President of the Government of the Vatican City State;
- Cardinal Francisco Javier Errázuriz Ossa of Chile, the retired archbishop of Santiago;
- Cardinal Oswald Gracias of India, archbishop of Bombay (Mumbai);
- Cardinal Laurent Monsengwo Pasinya of the Democratic Republic of Congo, the archbishop of Kinshasa
- O'Malley;
- Marx;
- Cardinal George Pell of Australia, the archbishop of Sydney;
- Cardinal Oscar Andrés Rodríguez Maradiaga of Honduras, the archbishop of Tegucigalpa.

Bishop Marcello Semeraro of Albano in Italy was named the group's secretary.

The document from John Paul II on the Roman Curia to be studied by this group is titled *Pastor Bonus*, and was issued in 1988.

***(Follow John Allen on Twitter: @JohnLAllenJr)***

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