

Pope names Vatican City official a bishop for pastoral care of workers

Cindy Wooden Catholic News Service | Oct. 15, 2013
Vatican City

Saying he wanted to ensure the spiritual care and religious formation of employees, Pope Francis announced he was making the new secretary-general of Vatican City a bishop.

The Vatican announced the pope's decision to make Fr. Fernando Vergez a bishop Tuesday and published the pope's letter explaining the decision. The 68-year-old member of the Legionaries of Christ was named secretary-general in late August.

Writing to Cardinal Giuseppe Bertello, president of the commission governing the city-state, Pope Francis said the Vatican has a primarily "spiritual and pastoral mission," which gives it a special responsibility for its employees.

Quoting Blessed John Paul II, Pope Francis said the employees should have "the profound conviction that their work includes an ecclesial responsibility that should be lived in a spirit of authentic faith."

Pope Francis, who invited Vatican City garbage collectors and gardeners to be the first guests at his private morning Masses, said the Vatican has a responsibility "to care for the human and Christian formation of the employees in a direct way."

The pope said he was naming Vergez a bishop so he could coordinate the pastoral care of city-state employees, who also include those working at the Vatican post office and the Vatican Museums.

Vergez's predecessor was named a bishop the same day he was given the post in 2011 by now-retired Pope Benedict XVI. However, if a letter explaining the decision was written, it was never released by the Vatican.

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