

Woman appointed as rector of Pontifical university in Rome

Joshua J. McElwee | Jul. 3, 2014 NCR Today

The Vatican's Congregation for Catholic Education has appointed a woman to lead one of Rome's seven pontifical universities, the special academic institutions established directly under the authority of the pope.

Franciscan Sr. Mary Melone has been appointed rector of the Pontifical University Antonianum, the Roman university run by one of the main orders of male Franciscans, the Order of Friars Minor. The appointment was announced Thursday [on the Friars website](#) [1].

The appointment marks a significant shift for Rome's pontifical institutions. Although most have female students, they also have many male seminarian attendees, studying in preparation for the priesthood.

Franciscan Fr. Michael Perry, an American who heads the Order of Friars Minor globally, said in a statement on the friars website that he shares "with conviction the confidence expressed by this choice by the Congregation ... in the certainty that the daring novelty of this appointment will open new horizons for the life and academic activities of the Franciscan Institute of study and research."

Melone, a native of northern Italy, is a member of the Franciscan Sisters of Blessed Angelina. According to a [release from the Antonianum](#)[2], she has a doctorate in dogmatic theology from that university and had previously served as its dean of theology.

Melone's has been appointed to a three-year term as rector, from 2014-17.

A statement [on her order's website](#) [3] congratulated the new rector "for this great and important task in the Church and the Franciscan family, a sign of respect, trust and the newness of the Spirit."

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[1] <http://www.ofm.org/ofm/?p=7994&lang=en>

[2] <http://www.antonianum.eu/it/news/3309/La-profssa-Mary-Melone-nuovo-Rettore-Magnifico-della-Pontificia-Universita-Antonianum>

[3] <http://www.angeline.it>

[4] <mailto:jmcelwee@ncronline.org>

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