Opinion



by Joshua J. McElwee

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Welcome to the Rome-centric version of your weekly international edition of the daily briefing, where we'll highlight the most recent news out of or about the Vatican. Here we go:

- A new textbook from Archbishop Silvano Tomasi, the longest-serving Vatican ambassador to the U.N. at Geneva, **chronicles some of the major developments in the Catholic church's social teaching** since the onset of the new millennium.
- The global Catholic peace group Pax Christi International will be hosting its annual award ceremony Oct. 29 in Rome for the first time in the honor's 29-year history. The event will be held near St. Peter's Square **to recognize a coalition of indigenous activists that have been leading nonviolent campaigns against fracking in southern Mexico**.
- In case you missed this news from last weekend, Pope Francis publicly corrected Cardinal Robert Sarah, telling him **liturgical translations are no longer to be 'imposed' from Vatican**. Michael Sean Winters says the pope's reforms on this issue **show he is no fan of sclerosis** and wants "a church engaged, accompanying people; a field hospital, getting dirty in the streets."
- Pope Francis will make an off-planet (well, low Earth obit) phone call Oct. 26 **to greet the astronauts living on the International Space Station**. Houston-Galveston Cardinal Daniel DiNardo will also take part from NASA's Mission

Control.

- The U.S. Embassy to the Holy See i**s preparing to welcome its new ambassador-designate, Callista Gingrich**. Louis Bono, who has headed the embassy staff in the interim between ambassadors, said Gingrich is expected to arrive in Rome with her husband Newt in early November but likely won't receive her formal credentials from Pope Francis until January.
- Pope Francis Oct. 25 appointed **Divine Word priest Tarcisius Kikuchi the new archbishop of Tokyo**, moving him from leadership of the small diocese of Niigata. Kikuchi replaces Archbishop Peter Okada, who is retiring at age 76.
- St. Peter's Square **will see its annual Christmas nativity scene and tree inaugurated Dec. 7.** The Abbey of Montevergine in Italy's central Campania region has donated the scene this year, and it includes figures in 18th century Neapolitan costumes. The tree comes from the Archdiocese of Elk in northeastern Poland and is a red fir reaching some 90 feet in height.
- And for your non-Vatican Roman news this week, *Twin Peaks* director David Lynch **will be honored next week with a lifetime achievement** award from the Rome Film Fest. And public authorities in the eternal city are starting to worry about their neglect in caring for the city's famous stone pine trees after one **toppled and crushed a taxi full of people**.

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