Opinion



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

Take a deep breath before continuing -- it's been a busy week.

First, in an extraordinary letter to the Chilean bishops released yesterday, **Pope Francis admitted making "serious mistakes" in his handling of clergy sexual abuse cases** in the country and said he feels "pain and shame" for the "crucified lives" of those who suffered abuse.

While the pontiff did not reveal whether he will sack a Chilean prelate accused of covering up abuse, he has asked the bishops to come to Rome en masse for a meeting at some point soon.

Earlier yesterday, the Pontifical Commission for Latin America released its final document from a recent plenary session, in which the group **proposed that the church hold a Synod of Bishops "on the theme of the woman in the life and mission of the church."**

Women should be more involved in decision making on a parish, diocesan, national and global church level, the group said, adding: "the absence of women in decision making is a defect, an ecclesiological lacuna, the negative effect of a clerical and

chauvinistic mentality."

On Monday, Francis released **the fifth major teaching document of his papacy**: an apostolic exhortation on holiness that centered on how Christians cannot focus on being saintly just through prayer but must also serve those in need. The pontiff said the most basic teaching handed on by Jesus is to help others, "without any 'ifs or buts.'"

Columnist Michael Sean Winters said Francis **put the "exhort" back into exhortation**. "The document is one long, incisive effort to urge us Christians on," said Winters.

In a column today, theologian Brian Flanagan says **Francis' idea of holiness is rooted in Franciscan theology**, in the idea of "becoming small and embracing the God who became small for our sake."

Earlier in the week, **Vatican officials arrested an Italian monsignor** who was recalled from service at the apostolic nunciature in Washington in August 2017 under suspicion of possessing or distributing child pornography.

In a brief note April 7, the Vatican press office said the city-state's prosecutor had issued an arrest warrant that morning for Msgr. Carlo Capella, who was subsequently detained by the Vatican Gendarmerie.

The two remaining 'dubia' cardinals also made a return, reaffirming their opposition to the possibility of the Catholic Church allowing divorced and remarried persons to receive Communion.

Approving a short declaration made after a conference in Rome April 7, U.S. Cardinal Raymond Burke and German Cardinal Walter Brandmüller said with a few dozen other participants they felt compelled to speak again "amidst the grave danger to the faith and unity of the Church that has arisen."

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