News
Vatican



Workers survey bones taken from an ossuary at the Teutonic cemetery in this image released by the Vatican July 27, 2019. The bones were inspected in the hope of finding the missing remains of a German princess and duchess and possibly the remains of Emanuela Orlandi, who disappeared in 1983. The Vatican announced that none of the bones postdate the 1800s. (CNS/Vatican Media)

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Vatican City — July 29, 2019
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The Vatican press office said that the results of a morphological analysis of bones and bone fragments found at an ossuary in a Vatican cemetery concluded that none belonged to Emanuela Orlandi, a young Italian woman who has been missing for more than 30 years.

Giovanni Arcudi, the forensic anthropologist who led the scientific investigation of the remains found at the Vatican's Teutonic Cemetery, "did not find any bone structure dating back to the period after the end of the 1800s," the Vatican said.

The forensic team concluded its study of the bones July 28.

However, an expert representing the Orlandi family requested about 70 bone remains be tested in a laboratory, despite objections by Arcudi and his team who believe the bones display signs of being "very old."

Nonetheless, those bone samples were catalogued and held by the Vatican police to be "available to the promoter of justice."

Orlandi, a Vatican City resident and the daughter of a Vatican employee, disappeared in Rome June 22, 1983, when she was 15.

In March, the family's lawyer revealed the family had been sent a letter with a photo of an angel above a tomb in the medieval cemetery now reserved mainly for German-speaking priests and members of religious orders.

The letter said, "Look where the angel is pointing," according to Laura Sgro, the lawyer.

She filed a formal petition with the Vatican to investigate the matter and, following her request, a Vatican City State court ordered the opening of the tombs.

After no human remains were found in the tombs during a search July 11, the Vatican sealed off two ossuaries – vaults containing the bones of multiple person –

for analysis.

Despite the forensic team's findings, the Vatican said it is committed to "seeking the truth about Emanuela Orlandi's disappearance" and denied that their cooperation in the investigation "can in no way mean, as some have stated, an implicit admission of responsibility."

"The search for the truth is in the interest of the Holy See and the Orlandi family," the Vatican said.

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