News



Msgr. Mark Miles translates from Italian into English for Pope Francis during a Mass during tropical storm conditions in Tacloban, Philippines, in this Jan. 17, 2015, file photo. Msgr. Miles has been named permanent observer of the Holy See to the Organization of American States. (CNS/Paul Haring)

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Pope Francis appointed an aide who served as his English interpreter and the former prefect of the Vatican Dicastery for Communication to new posts.

The Vatican announced Aug. 31 that the pope named Msgr. Mark Miles, a native of Gibraltar who worked in the Secretariat of State, as the Holy See's permanent observer to the Washington-based Organization of American States, also known as OAS.

According to its website, the OAS is "a multilateral regional organization focused on human rights, electoral oversight, social and economic development, and security in the Western Hemisphere." The role of Vatican permanent observer was previously held simultaneously by the Vatican's permanent observer at the United Nations.

Fluent in English, Italian, Spanish and French, Miles served at Vatican embassies in Ecuador and Hungary before working at the Secretariat of State. He is better known, however, as one of the pope's English translators at general audiences, during apostolic visits and at meetings with heads of state, including U.S. President Donald Trump during his visit to the Vatican in 2017.

The Vatican said Francis also named Msgr. Dario Vigano as vice chancellor of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences with responsibility for the academy's communications sector.

Vigano had served as prefect of the Vatican Dicastery for Communication when it was created in June 2015. However, after a very public controversy involving the use of a letter by retired Pope Benedict XVI, Vigano resigned as prefect three years later.

At a book presentation in March 2018, Vigano read only selected sentences from a letter Benedict wrote to decline writing a reflection for the book series titled, "The Theology of Pope Francis." Vigano's office also published a photograph showing the first page of the letter, with several lines purposefully blurred, and the second page,

except for the signature, covered by a book.

An uproar ensued over the intentional blurring of the photograph and questions were raised in the media about what exactly the letter said. Several days later, the Vatican released the full text which showed that not only had Benedict said he was unable to read the full series, but that he objected to one of the authors chosen to write one of the volumes.

However, after accepting Vigano's resignation as prefect, the pope asked him to remain at the dicastery as "assessor" to help continue the work of unifying the Vatican's communications and media outlets.

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