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Junno Arocho Esteves

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Pope Francis and his international Council of Cardinals reviewed aspects of the draft of the apostolic constitution that would govern the Roman Curia, including a greater role for lay men and women.

The Vatican press office issued a statement Dec. 4 saying the council also discussed the relationship between the Curia — the church's central administrative offices — and the bishops' conferences around the world.

"The activity of the council was aimed at deepening two aspects of importance pertaining to the draft of the new apostolic constitution," the Vatican said.

It included, "the relations between the Curia and the episcopal conferences and the presence of the lay faithful, men and women, in decision-making roles in the offices of the Curia and in other bodies of the church, and to study the theological-pastoral basis of these aspects."

The council members met Dec. 2-4, and Francis was present except when he had a scheduling conflict.

The Vatican said council members also met with Cardinal Michael Czerny, undersecretary of the Migrants and Refugee Section of the Vatican Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, who delivered a report on the recent Synod of Bishops for the Amazon.

Czerny, along with Bishop David Martinez De Aguirre Guinea of Puerto Maldonado, Peru, served as special secretary to the synod.

Additionally, the council also listened to "some considerations" offered by Cardinal Sean P. O'Malley of Boston, on the "elaboration of the postsynodal document."

With regard to the proposed apostolic constitution, provisionally titled "Praedicate evangelium" ("Preach the Gospel"), the council continued to receive "suggestions" on the new document.

The pope and the Council of Cardinals, the Vatican said, will continue to "read and evaluate" the proposals at their next meeting, which is scheduled for February.

All six members of the council attended the fall meetings: Cardinals Pietro Parolin, Vatican secretary of state; Cardinals O'Malley; Oscar Rodriguez Maradiaga of Tegucigalpa, Honduras; Oswald Gracias of Mumbai, India; Reinhard Marx of Munich and Freising, Germany; and Giuseppe Bertello, president of the commission governing Vatican City State. Also in attendance was the council's secretary, Bishop Marcello Semeraro of Albano.

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