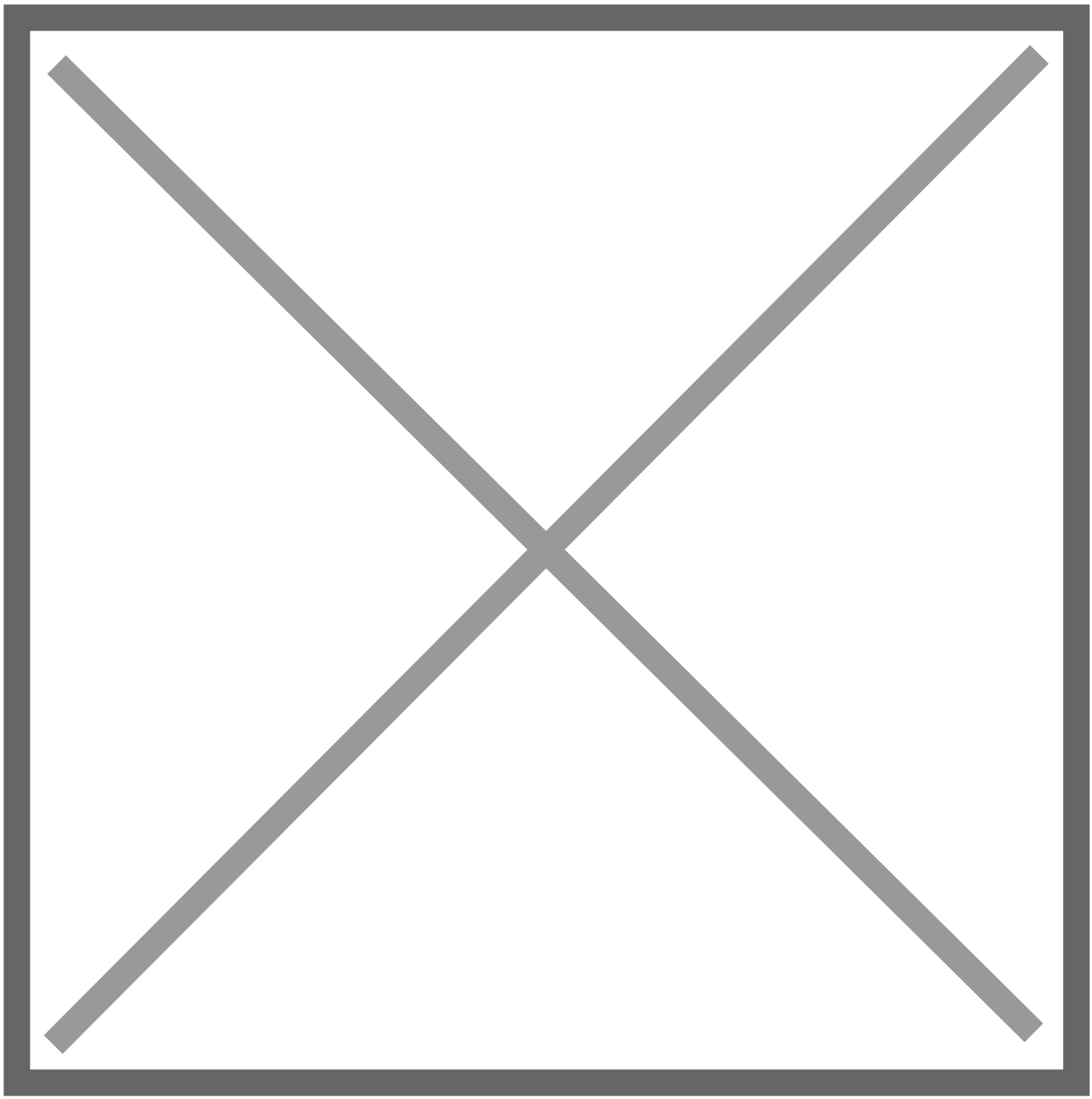
Vatican



Cardinal Peter Turkson, prefect of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, attends a news conference at the Vatican Dec. 21, 2021, for the release of Pope Francis' message for the Jan. 1, 2022 World Day of Peace. Cardinal Turkson downplayed his offer to Pope Francis to resign as head of the dicastery, saying he had completed his five-year term and it was up to the pope to decide what comes next. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)



by Christopher White

Former Vatican Correspondent (2021-2025)

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ROME — Pope Francis has named Cardinal Peter Turkson as the new chancellor of both the Vatican's Pontifical Academy of Sciences and the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences.

The announcement was published in the Vatican's daily bulletin on April 4.

In December, the pope accepted the 73-year-old Ghanian cardinal's resignation as head of the Vatican's Integral Human Development dicastery, two years shy of 75, the mandatory age when bishops are required by church law to submit their resignation to the pope. Turkson will replace Argentine Bishop Marcelo Sánchez Sorondo, 79, who has served as chancellor of both academies since 1998.

Turkson has worked in Rome for over a decade, and has been prefect of the Dicastery for the Promotion of Integral Human Development since its formation in January 2017. From 2009 to 2016, he served as head of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, until the creation of the new dicastery in 2017.

Once considered *papabile*, meaning a possible contender for the next pope, Turkson was a key drafter of Francis' 2015 environmental encyclical *Laudato Si'* and has regularly represented the Vatican at the United Nations, the World Economic Forum and other high profile global forums.

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The Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences, which Turkson will now lead as chancellor, was established by Pope John Paul II in 1994 to promote "the study and progress of the social sciences, primarily economics, sociology, law and political science." While the academy is an autonomous entity, according to its statutes, it was founded to operate closely with the then-Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace.

The Pontifical Academy of Sciences traces its origins back much further to 1603 and at the time was the first exclusively scientific academy in the world. Over the years, the body has included prominent scientific members such as Galileo Galilei, Stephen Hawking and Jennifer Doudna.

Both institutions are part of the 10 pontifical academies that are operated by the Holy See for the specialized study of various subjects.

The Pontifical Academy of Sciences and the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences are both headquartered in the Casina Pio IV, a 16th century residence located in the Vatican gardens.