Vatican
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An older white man wearing glasses and a clerical collar looks at the camera

Cardinal Kevin J. Farrell, prefect of the Dicastery for Laity, the Family and Life, attends a news conference at the Vatican in this May 10, 2022, file photo. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)



by Catholic News Service

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Vatican City — June 2, 2023
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Pope Francis has named U.S. Cardinal Kevin J. Farrell, prefect of the Dicastery for Laity, the Family and Life, to be the next president of the supreme court of Vatican City State.

Until Francis modified the judiciary of the city-state in April, the president of the court was always the prefect of the Apostolic Signature, the Holy See's highest court. The current president is Cardinal Dominque Mamberti.

The Vatican announced June 2 that Farrell, 75, would become president of the Court of Cassation, as the Vatican's highest civil court is known, beginning Jan. 1. The position is not a fulltime role.

As judges on the court, Francis named Cardinals Matteo Zuppi of Bologna, Paolo Lojudice of Siena and Mauro Gambetti, the papal vicar for Vatican City.

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All four cardinals were appointed to five-year terms.

The Court of Cassation is the highest court of appeals for Vatican City State and can interpret Vatican City law.

In addition to serving as prefect of the dicastery, Farrell also is camerlengo or chamberlain of the Holy Roman Church. While the pope is alive, the job is basically just a title. But when a pope dies or resigns, the chamberlain is charged with sealing the papal apartments, chairing consultations about the papal funeral, making the practical preparations for the conclave to elect the next pope, and chairing a committee of cardinals that takes care of the church's ordinary affairs until a new pope is elected.