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Pope Francis meets with the members of the Council of Cardinals at the Vatican April 24, 202

Pope Francis meets with the members of the Council of Cardinals at the Vatican April 24, 2023. Pictured, clockwise from the left, are: Cardinals Gérald C. Lacroix of Québec; Juan José Omella Omella of Barcelona; Seán P. O'Malley of Boston; Fridolin Ambongo Besungu of Kinshasa, Congo; and Pietro Parolin, Vatican secretary of state. Continuing, to the right of the pope are: Bishop Marco Mellino, council secretary; and Cardinals Sérgio da Rocha of São Salvador da Bahia, Brazil; Oswald Gracias of Mumbai, India; Fernando Vérgez Alzaga, president of the commission governing Vatican City State; and Jean-Claude Hollerich of Luxembourg. (CNS photo/Vatican Media)

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With the help of an expert canon lawyer, Pope Francis and members of his international Council of Cardinals discussed ways that the principles behind his reform of the Roman Curia also can be reflected in the structuring and functioning of diocesan chanceries.

At the end of the council's meeting June 26-27, the Vatican press office said one of the items on the agenda had been the beginning of a "reflection on how to implement the spirit, principles and criteria of the apostolic constitution *Praedicate Evangelium* ("Preach the Gospel") in the diocesan curias."

Cardinal Gianfranco Ghirlanda, a longtime professor of canon law at Rome's Pontifical Gregorian University and a top canonical adviser to the pope and various Vatican offices, joined the members of the Council of Cardinals for the discussion, the Vatican said.

The apostolic constitution, published in 2022, called for the "missionary conversion" of the church and of its structures to better serve the church's mission of preaching the Gospel. An important part of that effort, it said, was strengthening the church's "synodal" nature so that all the baptized listen to one another and share responsibility for the church's mission.

The constitution also emphasized the need for church offices to promote the spirituality of employees, as well as their "personal integrity and professionalism" and cooperation across offices and areas of expertise.

The council members also were joined by Cardinal Mario Grech, secretary-general of the Synod of Bishops, for a discussion on synodality "with an update on the steps taken in recent months" in preparation for the synod's first general assembly in October, the press office said.

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Cardinal Sean O'Malley of Boston, a member of the Council of Cardinals and president of the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors, informed the group about the commission's plenary meeting in May "and the work of the commission to update regulations and practices throughout the church to ensure that child protection mechanisms are effective in every diocese," the press statement said.

In addition, the press office said, "the ongoing conflict in Ukraine was the subject of reflection."

In addition to O'Malley, the members of the council are: Cardinals Pietro Parolin, Vatican secretary of state; Sérgio da Rocha of São Salvador da Bahia, Brazil; Oswald

Gracias of Mumbai, India; Fernando Vérgez Alzaga, president of the commission governing Vatican City State; Jean-Claude Hollerich of Luxembourg; Gérald Lacroix of Québec; Juan José Omella Omella of Barcelona; and Fridolin Ambongo Besungu of Kinshasa, Congo.