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Pope Leo XIV greets Cardinal Blase Cupich of Chicago during an audience at the Vatican Oct.

Pope Leo XIV greets Cardinal Blase Cupich of Chicago during an audience at the Vatican Oct. 9 with a pilgrimage of labor union leaders from Chicago. (CNS/Vatican Media)



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Pope Leo XIV has named Chicago Cardinal Blase Cupich to the commission responsible for governing Vatican City State — the world's smallest nation state.

The nomination comes as Leo begins to name appointments in key Vatican positions after months of quiet discernment following his election to the papacy in May.

In September, the pope tapped Archbishop Filippo Iannone to fill his previous role as prefect of the Dicastery for Bishops, one of the Vatican's most consequential organs and a long-awaited appointment after Leo left the role vacant for more than four months.

The nomination comes as a vote of confidence in Cupich from Leo, who is a Chicago native. Just two weeks earlier, Cupich and the Chicago Archdiocese were criticized by conservative Catholics for plans to honor Illinois Sen. Dick Durbin for his immigration work. Durbin, a Democrat, supports legalized abortion. Durbin eventually declined the award from the archdiocese.

Responding to reporters' questions about the issue Sept, 30, Leo said abortion was not the only way to judge a person's pro-life record.

"Someone who says, 'I'm against abortion but I'm in favor of the death penalty,' is not really pro-life," he said. "Someone who says, 'I'm against abortion, but I'm in favor of the inhuman treatment of immigrants in the United States,' I don't know if that's pro-life."

Cupich will be the only non-Rome-based member of the commission, known as the Pontifical Commission for Vatican City. The group is the small nation-state's legislative body. It approves and interprets laws, manages budgets and oversees administration of Vatican City. Proposed laws, budgets and plans must first be approved by the pope — as chief executive of the state — before being enacted. The commission is also responsible for security at the Vatican, and for the conservation of the Vatican Museum, among other duties.

The other members of the commission are: Cardinals Kevin Farrell, prefect of the Dicastery for Laity, Family, and Life; Claudio Gugerotti, prefect of the Dicastery for the Eastern Churches; Arthur Roche, prefect of the Dicastery for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments; Lazzaro You Heung-sik, prefect of the Dicastery for the Clergy; and Baldassare Reina, papal vicar for Rome.

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