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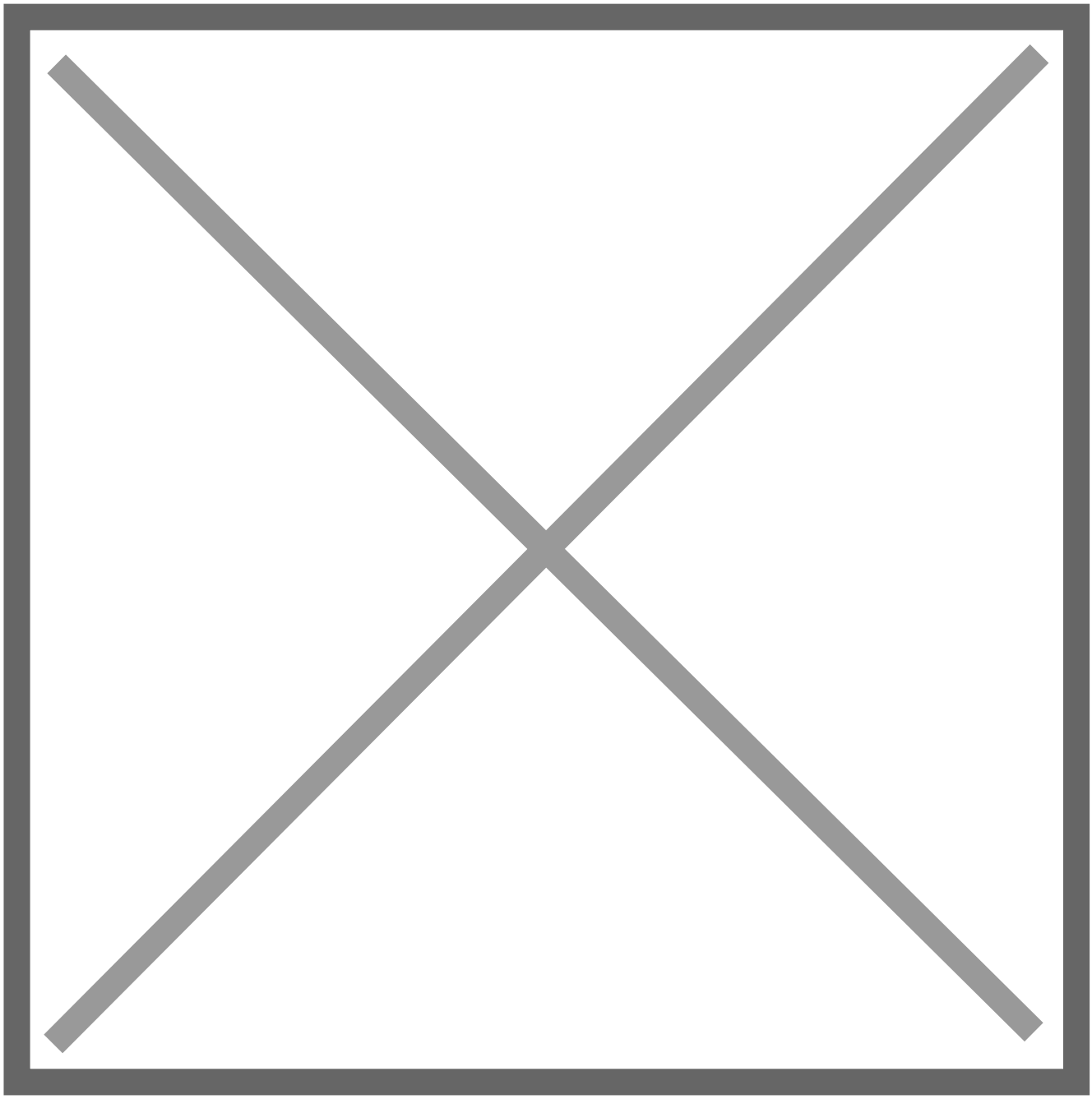

A file photo shows the dome of St. Peter's Basilica at sunset at the Vatican. Pope Leo XIV spent what is traditionally his weekly day off on Tuesday issuing a flurry of legislation and appointments June 30, 2026, overhauling the Vatican's financial watchdog agency, revising the governing structure of the Vicariate of Rome and making several appointments in the Roman Curia. (CNS/Paul Haring)

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Pope Leo XIV spent what is traditionally his weekly day off on Tuesday issuing a flurry of legislation and appointments June 30, overhauling the Vatican's financial watchdog agency, revising the governing structure of the Vicariate of Rome and making several appointments in the Roman Curia.

While the pope's letter to SSPX garnered (and merited) the headlines, the less reported decrees released by the Holy See Press Office show a pope who is reforming quietly and methodically, fine tuning the reforms made by his predecessor Pope Francis, rather than dramatically shaking up the Roman Curia.

Here is a breakdown of what changes he made this week and why it matters.

Financial watchdog restructured

Leo signed a new 12-article statute for the Supervisory and Financial Information Authority, known as ASIF, the Vatican's financial intelligence and anti-money-laundering agency. The statute eliminates the agency's president and board and replaces them with a director and deputy director, both appointed by the pope for five-year terms.

Under the new rules, ASIF retains authority over supervision of money laundering, terrorist financing and financing of weapons proliferation, as well as financial intelligence gathering and prudential supervision of entities conducting financial activity in Vatican territory. The agency's annual and financial reports will now go to the Vatican's Council for the Economy for approval.

The statute also expands ASIF's authority to arbitrate disputes between users and the Institute for the Works of Religion, the Vatican bank, extending that jurisdiction beyond payment systems to cover the full range of the bank's financial services.

"Transparency, integrity, and accountability in economic and financial activities constitute indispensable elements of good governance and service to the common good, which must characterize the Institutions of the Holy See and of the Vatican City State," Leo wrote in his introduction to the new statute.

The pope added that in light of the reforms already enacted by Francis and the continual evolution of the relevant international standards, it appeared appropriate to update the ASIF's statutes so that it may continue to carry out the functions entrusted to it with "the utmost effectiveness and contribute, with renewed vigor, to the transparency, integrity, stability, and security of the economic and financial system of the Holy See and the Vatican City State."

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A reform of the reform of the Vicariate of Rome

Leo also issued a motu proprio adjusting *In Ecclesiarum Communione*, the 2023 constitution Francis used to reorganize the Vicariate of Rome. Leo's new law reaffirms the cardinal vicar's governing powers, while also giving day-to-day coordination of the offices and the administrative structure to a "moderator curiae," appointed by the pope for a five-year term. The new reform legislation, called *Confirma Fratres Tuos*, or "Confirm your brothers," also streamlines the distribution of responsibilities within the vicariate.

These changes build off of other administrative changes Leo made in the vicariate last fall that reestablished certain administrative aspects Francis had abolished in the prior reforms.

The Vatican said the changes followed a review process by a working group Leo ordered in February, after a few years of experience operating under the 2023 reform, smoothing out administrative kinks that needed updating. It shows Leo is willing to revise and reverse aspects of Francis' administrative reforms without completely overturning them.

Peter's Pence runs a deficit

Separately, the Vatican released its 2025 financial report for Peter's Pence, the collection that funds the pope's charitable and administrative activities. The fund took in 57.6 million euros and spent 59.8 million euros, leaving a roughly 2.2 million euros deficit despite the significant reduction in expenses from the previous year. The total amount of individual donations dropped from 2024 to 2025, while the United States remained the largest source of donations. Of the money spent, 41.2 million euros supported the Holy See's operations, while 13.3 million euros funded 252 direct-assistance projects in 74 countries, with Africa receiving the largest share.

Promoting current officials in the Roman Curia

Leo made several appointments across Vatican offices, largely promoting officials who already served in the Roman Curia under Francis rather than bringing in outsiders. Bishop Marco Mellino will be moved up from adjunct secretary to secretary of the Dicastery for Legislative Texts, and Msgr. Lucio Adrián Ruiz will be shuffled from the Dicastery for Communication to the Dicastery for the Service of Charity starting in September. Massimo Ralli, an official at the Dicastery for the Service of Charity, was also named undersecretary of the dicastery.

In the Dicastery for Integral Human Development, Leo confirmed and promoted the leadership appointed by Francis, naming the dicastery's secretary as the dicastery's prefect, the cardinal who served as undersecretary of the dicastery's migrants section was appointed as pro-prefect, and the undersecretary became the secretary. More notable about this particular set of appointments is the pairing of a woman religious with a cardinal as the top officials in the dicastery, a replication of a governance novelty first introduced by Francis introduced in 2025. Sr. Alessandra Smerilli will serve as the dicastery's prefect with Cardinal Fabio Baggio serving as pro-prefect. The appointment is a continuation of Francis' legacy of placing women in senior Vatican leadership roles while at the same time confirming the personnel

selected for leadership positions by Francis.

A consultative governing style

From emphasizing financial transparency to fine tuning reform legislation, Leo, a trained canon lawyer and former math major, is adjusting the machinery of Vatican governance in his careful style. The pope's appointments and legislation were announced following a two-day extraordinary consistory of cardinals — the second such meeting he has called this year — during which Leo told the cardinals he had assembled from across the globe that his ministry "cannot be carried out alone" and asked for their "strong, explicit, and public" support. While the motu proprio and financial transparency statutes were signed before the consistory began, meaning they weren't the product of the cardinals' input, taken all together the week's announcements signal Leo's preference for consultation and incremental change over the headline-grabbing reforms of his predecessor.