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No comment from Vatican on Mahony

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NCR Today

LA abuse cases

A spokesperson told *NCR* today that the Vatican is not planning on releasing a public comment on a decision by Archbishop Jose Gomez of Los Angeles to relieve his predecessor, Cardinal Roger Mahony, of all administrative and public duties over his "failure to fully protect young people entrusted to his care."

Gomez announced in a Thursday letter, which coincided with the release of files from Los Angeles concerning priests who committed sexual abuse, that he had also accepted a request from Auxiliary Bishop Thomas Curry to be relieved of his duties.

Jesuit Fr. Federico Lombardi, the Vatican spokesperson, told *NCR* that although he has received several requests for comment from news agencies, there are no plans at this time to issue a statement. Among other things, he said, the Vatican needs time "to better understand the situation."

As a technical matter, Gomez's action affects only Mahony's responsibilities in the Los Angeles archdiocese. He remains a cardinal and a voting member of three Vatican departments: the Congregation for Eastern Churches, the Council for Social Communications, and the Prefecture for the Economic Affairs of the Holy See. Mahony will turn 77 on Feb. 27, which means that should a conclave occur in the next three years, he would also be eligible to cast a vote for the next pope. (Mahony participated in the April 2005 conclave that elected Pope Benedict XVI.)

It remains to be seen whether Gomez's decision will have any wider repercussions for Mahony's other roles.

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