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New Vatican sex abuse prosecutor praises media

by Alessandro Speciale by Religion News Service

Vatican City — In his first public appearance since arriving in Rome, the new Vatican prosecutor for sexual abuse cases in the Catholic church praised the media's role in uncovering the scandal.

American priest Robert Oliver was chosen in December by Pope Benedict XVI to replace Fr. Charles Scicluna as "promoter of justice" at the Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith after Scicluna was appointed a bishop in Malta.

At a press conference Tuesday at the Gregorian University in Rome, Oliver -- who took up his post Friday -- acknowledged the "service" of those who "continue to put before us that we need to confront this problem."

"They helped to keep the energy ... the movement going so that we would honestly and with transparency and with our strength confront what is true," he said.

Oliver handled abuse cases as the top canon lawyer of the Boston archdiocese after *The Boston Globe* unearthed the abuse scandal that eventually led to the resignation of Boston Cardinal Bernard Law in 2002.

Church law requires Catholic bishops to refer credible accusations of abuse by priests to the Vatican doctrinal office.

At the Vatican, Oliver will also be in charge of reviewing the rules for handling and preventing abuse drawn up by bishops' conferences around the world.

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