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Vatican offices screech to halt amid papal resignation

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NCR Today

Benedict Resigns

The resignation of Pope Benedict has brought Vatican activity to a screeching halt.

Peter Borre, leader of the Boston-based Council of Parishes, told *NCR* Monday that his canon lawyers in Rome informed him that both tribunals of signatures and congregations at the Vatican have suspended meetings and decisions for the time being.

For Borre, that means delays in outcomes for the 22 active cases involving 12 U.S. dioceses he's currently pursuing in Rome, roughly nine awaiting rulings from the Vatican's supreme court, the Apostolic Signatura, with others at the Congregation for Clergy.

The Council of Parishes advocates and represents parishioners whose parishes and churches face closure, often advising them of their rights under canon law. Most notably, Borre and the council have represented parishes in Boston and Cleveland.

His canon lawyers told him that news broke around noon in Rome, and that their phones have been ringing off the hook since then.

While Benedict's resignation comes without precedent in the past 600 years, it is common protocol for Vatican offices to postpone major decisions in the wake of pope's death.

Under those circumstances, clergy at the heads of departments in the Roman Curia resign their posts, though the offices continue functioning under each's secretaries, said Jesuit Fr. Thomas Reese, in an extensive Q-and-A at Americamagazine.org outlining the steps of papal transition.

Reese also noted that "serious and controversial matters are to await the election of a new pope."

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