

Published on *National Catholic Reporter* (<https://www.ncronline.org>)

December 4, 2013 at 10:50am

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## Vatican: Cardinals' group expects curial reform to be long process

by Joshua J. McElwee

**Vatican City** — The work of the eight-cardinal group advising Pope Francis on reforming the church's central bureaucracy is likely to go on for months, the Vatican said Wednesday.

The Council of Cardinals is only in "the first phase of the journey that will require much more time," said Vatican spokesman Jesuit Fr. Federico Lombardi at a press briefing.

"This goes much beyond the month of February," when the cardinals are expected to meet again, Lombardi said.

Lombardi's briefing Wednesday followed a similar one by the spokesman Tuesday, in which he said the cardinals' group is studying not small changes but wide revisions of the Vatican bureaucracy, known as the Roman Curia.

On Wednesday, Lombardi reiterated that the cardinals are evaluating the work of each of the Vatican's offices "one by one." Among the offices Lombardi said they have evaluated so far are those concerned with the church's liturgical celebrations, the process of declaring people saints, and the evangelization of peoples.

"They are just making a first round in tackling all of the topics before going in depth," Lombardi said Wednesday. The cardinals, he said, want to look "at the general picture before going into the details."

The Vatican has said the third meeting of the group will come Feb. 17-18 in Rome, followed by an as-yet unscheduled meeting of the full body of some 200 cardinals around the world.

Lombardi on Wednesday also responded to a question about American radio personality Rush Limbaugh's assertion that Francis' apostolic exhortation "The Joy of the Gospel" (*Evangelii Gadium*), released last week, had Marxist leanings.

"I wouldn't want to give a formal answer to a question that really doesn't have to do with a concrete thing but is a feeling," Lombardi said. The exhortation, he said, should be approached from a perspective of how the pope views the world.

The cardinals' group is meeting Tuesday through Thursday at the Vatican. The group, which includes prelates from six of the seven continents, met for the first time Oct. 1-3. The lone American in the group is Boston's Cardinal Sean O'Malley. Honduran Cardinal Óscar Rodríguez Maradiaga serves as its coordinator.

Pope Francis announced the formation of the consultative body in April, saying it was meant to "study a project of revision" of the Vatican's bureaucracy, which last underwent significant revisions in 1988 under Pope John Paul II.

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