

## Pope setting up board to hear appeals of clerical sex abuse offenders

Cindy Wooden Catholic News Service | May. 19, 2014  
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The Vatican indicated Pope Francis was establishing a commission under the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith to examine the appeals of priests punished for sexual abuse of minors and other very serious crimes.

In a brief note Monday, the Vatican press office announced the pope had nominated Argentine Archbishop Jose Luis Mollaghan of Rosario to be a member of the congregation "in the commission being established to examine the appeals of clergy for 'delicta graviora,' " the Vatican term for sexual abuse of minors and serious sins against the sacraments.

The Vatican did not provide further details about the commission, when it would be established or what the extent of its mandate would be. It did not mention what Mollaghan's position on the commission would be.

In indicating that the archbishop has headed the archdiocese of Rosario "until now," the announcement signaled that being part of the commission would be a full-time job in Rome.

AICA, the Argentine Catholic news agency, reported Monday that Archbishop Emil Paul Tscherrig, Vatican nuncio to Argentina, announced Mollaghan's appointment and said he would serve as apostolic administrator of Rosario until a new archbishop is named.

Mollaghan, 68, holds a doctorate in canon law from the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome. He was named an auxiliary bishop of Buenos Aires in 1993, one year after the current pope became an auxiliary bishop in the city. The two worked together until Mollaghan was named bishop of San Miguel in 2000.

Archbishop Silvano Tomasi, Vatican representative to U.N. agencies in Geneva, told a committee there May 6 that, between 2004 and 2013, the Holy See dismissed 848 priests from the priesthood as a result of sex abuse allegations found to be true. In another 2,572 cases -- mainly involving priests of an advanced age -- the men were ordered to have no contact with children and were ordered to retreat to a life of prayer and penance.

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