

## The Vatican by Augustinus

### Who benefits from the Vatican reform?

*The Pope has turned over temporal powers in Vatican City to Secretary of State Casaroli, while promoting his own supporters elsewhere.*

On April 9, it was made public that Pope John Paul II had decided to carry out a reform in the government of the Catholic Church accompanied by a significant change in the leadership of the Roman Curia, the papal bureaucracy. The extent of reshuffling and the decision to entrust the civil government of Vatican City to the Secretary of State, Cardinal Agostino Casaroli, raised several questions, many of which only time will answer.

Though the Apostolic Constitution "Regimini Ecclesiae," which came into force in 1968, had established the principle of appointments of limited duration (not more than five years for the Prefects of the Congregations), the actual choices were unexpected. According to the newspaper of the Holy See, *Osservatore Romano*, the decision underlines the pastoral mission and internationalization of the Church's government.

Let's examine the changes decided on by the Pope. In a handwritten document, he renounced the practical exercise of his powers in the civil government of Vatican City, entrusting them to the secretary of state. The document states: "We have decided to confer on you, as our secretary of state, a high and special mandate to represent us in the civil government of the state of the Vatican City and to exercise, in our behalf—always by reporting to us, especially in cases of particular importance—the powers and the responsibilities concerning our tem-

poral sovereignty over the state."

Cardinal Casaroli, who, as *EIR* has documented, is the author of a deal with Moscow that envisions the Catholic Church "surviving" in a world dominated by the Soviet Empire, has thus gained more power in the administration of the Vatican state. But on the other hand, he has lost the presidency of the commission that governs the Vatican state (formally subordinated to, but in reality independent of, the new Casaroli office) and the presidency of the APSA (the Administration of the Patrimony of the Holy See).

Casaroli's former position as head of the Pontifical Commission for the state of Vatican City was entrusted to Cardinal Sebastiano Baggio, who leaves the Congregation for the Bishops; Baggio's position there goes to African Cardinal Bernardin Gantin. Thus Cardinal Baggio loses the powerful Congregation for the Bishops (which decides on the promotion of bishops) but gains a position of high responsibility in the government of the state. His nomination reduces significantly the power of the controversial Monsignor Paul Marcinkus, who had been the president pro tem of the commission. It is widely believed that Marcinkus has lost any chance to be nominated cardinal.

The nomination of Cardinal Gantin is of the utmost importance, and could give the pope control over the nomination of bishops worldwide. It appears that this choice was decided

personally by John Paul II. Another African has been appointed to the Vatican: Nigerian Bishop Francis Arinze, who will preside over the Secretariat for Non-Christians. Monsignor Arize is known for his efforts to contain Islamic fanaticism in Africa.

More surprising was the nomination of the cardinal of Marseille, Roger Etchegaray, to the presidency of the *Iustitia et Pax* and *Cor Umum* commissions. The cardinal, known for his frequent changes of mind, was perhaps rewarded for his support of the recent statement by the French bishops on the necessity of military defense—a document opposite in its spirit to the "nuclear freeze" pastoral letter of the U.S. bishops.

Speculation is particularly rife over the news that Monsignor Achille Silvestrini, Casaroli's right-hand man, was not named to the presidency of a congregation. Among the most credible hypotheses advanced is that he is waiting to be named bishop of some important diocese such as Bologna or Genoa, as a springboard to becoming a cardinal. Silvestrini is probably preparing to take Casaroli's place who will have to step down in five years.

Among the most interesting reactions to this Vatican shift is from the Jesuits, who do not seem to like the new nominations, in particular that of the archbishop of Dublin, Monsignor Ryan, as prefect pro tem of the Congregation for the Evangelization of the Peoples. The Jesuits have themselves been trying for years to gain full control of the Church missions.

Socialist political scientist Gianni Baget Bozzo was more enthusiastic. "A Church that is no longer Italian, perhaps not even Eurocentric: this is the new possibility," he wrote. "We send our congratulations to Cardinal Casaroli. He has not only crushed Marcinkus; he has won, all along the line, on the issue of the *Ostpolitik*."