

## **Pope's cardinal advisors say Vatican will soon respond to allegations**

Pope Francis' group of cardinal advisors have issued a statement saying the Holy See is preparing an answer to current debates, presumably referencing questions raised following allegations by Archbishop Carlo Viganò.

Sent at the end of a day of meetings Sept. 10, the statement said the Council of Cardinals are in "full solidarity with Pope Francis in the face of what has happened in the last weeks, mindful that amid the current debate the Holy See is about to formulate any necessary clarifications."

Viganò, the former apostolic nuncio to the US, has claimed that a number of high-ranking Church authorities, including Pope Francis, were aware of accusations of misconduct against Archbishop Theodore McCarrick for many years. The former nuncio's allegations have prompted calls for transparency from numerous bishops in the U.S.

The Council of Cardinals, commonly shortened to "C9," is holding its 26th round of meetings at the Vatican Sept. 10-12.

The end of the month will mark five years since Pope Francis formed the council. Referencing this anniversary, Monday's statement also noted the cardinals' request that the pope use this milestone to reflect on the "work, structure and composition of the Council itself, also taking into account the advanced age of some members."

The statement could indicate changes in the group's makeup are imminent, especially as members age and some are dogged by controversy.

Cardinal Oscar Rodriguez Maradiaga of Tegucigalpa, a close confidant of the pope, is the C9's coordinator and for months has faced allegations concerning his personal finances.

Cardinal Francisco Javier Errázuriz Ossa, who retired as Archbishop of Santiago in 2010, is alleged to have participated in cover-ups of clerical sexual abuse in Chile over a period of years.

He is also the oldest member of the C9, at 85 years old.

Also over 75 are Cardinals Laurent Monsengwo Pasinya of Kinshasa and Cardinal George Pell.

Prefect of the Secretariat for the Economy, Pell has not participated in sessions of the C9 since the summer of 2017, when he returned to Australia to defend himself against charges of sex abuse.

This session is also when the group hands over to the pope their draft of a new apostolic constitution on the structure and duties of the Roman Curia. This proposal, tentatively titled *Praedicate evangelium*, has been the emphasis of the group's work over the last five years. It is a reform of the apostolic constitution *Pastor bonus*, which has governed the Roman Curia since 1988.

In their statement the cardinals also expressed satisfaction at the success of the World Meeting of Families in Dublin last month, congratulating Cardinal Kevin Farrell, head of the Dicastery for Family, Laity, and Life and Archbishop Diarmuid Martin of Dublin for their work organizing the event.