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THE NEW REGOLAMENTO GENERALE DELLA CURIA ROMANA

The Normative Implementation of *Praedicate Evangelium*

Niels Maris

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THE NEW REGOLAMENTO GENERALE DELLA CURIA ROMANA

The Normative Implementation of *Praedicate Evangelium*

BY NIELS MARIS

Summary: This article situates the 2025 *Regolamento Generale della Curia Romana*, promulgated by Pope Leo XIV, within the reform process initiated by *Praedicate Evangelium*. After outlining the ecclesiological and institutional context of the curial reform, it examines the new regulations through a systematic comparison with the 1999 *Regolamento*. The study analyses changes in terminology, structure, procedures, coordination mechanisms, and legal safeguards, and explores how the new provisions give concrete normative expression to the principles of evangelisation, synodality, and service to the Pope and the bishops.

Zusammenfassung: Dieser Artikel ordnet das 2025 von Papst Leo XIV. promulierte *Regolamento Generale della Curia Romana* in den durch *Praedicate Evangelium* initiierten Reformprozess ein. Nach einer Skizzierung des ekklesiologischen und institutionellen Kontextes der Kurienreform untersucht er die neuen Bestimmungen durch einen systematischen Vergleich mit dem *Regolamento* von 1999. Die Studie analysiert Änderungen hinsichtlich Terminologie, Struktur, Verfahren, Koordinationsmechanismen sowie Rechtsschutz und untersucht, wie die neuen Vorschriften den Prinzipien der Evangelisierung, der Synodalität und des Dienstes an Papst und Bischöfen konkreten Ausdruck verleihen.

1 Introduction

On 24 November 2025, the revised *Regolamento Generale della Curia Romana*¹ and an accompanying *Regolamento del Personale della Curia Romana*² were issued. Both documents had been signed a day earlier, on the Solemnity of Christ the King, by Pope Leo XIV. The first document sets out the functioning of the various institutions that together constitute the Curia. The second regulates the organisational, disciplinary and financial aspects of the employment relations of the staff working within these entities.

This publication is the result of a process set in motion in April 2022, when Pope Francis, shortly after the promulgation of the Apostolic Constitution *Praedicate Evangelium*³, announced that

¹ Leo XIV, *Regolamento Generale della Curia Romana* (23 November 2025), in: OR 165 (2025), n. 270, 24.11.2025, inserto speciale, p. I-II. Hereinafter referred to as: RG/25.

² Leo XIV, *Regolamento del Personale della Curia Romana* (23 November 2025), in: OR 165 (2025), n. 270, 24.11.2025, inserto speciale, p. III-VIII.

³ Francis, *Apostolic Constitution Praedicate Evangelium* (19 March 2022), in: AAS 114 (2022) 375-455. Hereinafter referred to as: PE.

the *Regolamento Generale della Curia Romana*⁴ of 1999 would also have to be revised. An Interdicasterial Commission⁵ was entrusted with this task, but required several years to complete the extensive work. With the introduction of the new regulations, Pope Leo XIV now formally replaces the old regulations issued by John Paul II, translating the guidelines and reforms of *Praedicate Evangelium* into a concrete and up-to-date administrative structure for the Roman Curia.

With *Praedicate Evangelium*, Pope Francis fundamentally reshaped the structure of the Roman Curia. The incipit, "*Proclaim the Gospel*", referring to Mk 16:15, highlights the missionary character of both the reform and the Roman Curia itself (PE part I, no. 1). The Preamble (PE part I, no. 1-12) explains that the reorganisation of the Curia is aimed at promoting evangelisation and at ensuring that the curial structures serve the Pope and the Bishops (PE part I, no. 1-3). It is explicitly stated that the Curia is not set between the Pope and the Bishops, but is at the service of both for the sake of their shared apostolic mission (PE part I, no. 8-9). This vision is rooted in the ecclesiology of the Second Vatican Council, in which communion, mission, and synodality mutually uphold one another (PE part I, no. 4-7). The constitution further emphasises that an authentic reform of the Roman Curia is not merely organisational, but requires an inner renewal of all who serve within it, so that the Church may credibly fulfil her evangelising mandate (PE part I, no. 11-12)⁶.

Up to now, however, there had been no tailored rules for the concrete functioning of the Roman Curia, nor working regulations to put these new principles into practice. That is precisely the purpose of the Regulations signed by Leo XIV. They define how the institutions that make up the Roman Curia cooperate with one another, which procedures apply to decision-making, what responsibilities staff at different levels have, and how administrative processes should be carried out. The Personnel Regulations also govern labour relations within the Roman Curia, such as conditions for appointment and procedures for dismissal.

4 John Paul II, *Regolamento Generale della Curia Romana*, in: AAS 91 (1999) 629-699. Hereinafter referred to as: RG/99. Over the years, various amendments were made to this Regulations, mainly concerning labour and personnel provisions. See: *Secretariat of State*, Visto l'articolo 15 (18 January 2002), in: ULSA Bollettino 11 (2002), at: <https://www.ulsava.it/pubblicazioni/bollettini/bollettino-n-11-2002/testi-aggiornati/art-15-del-regolamento-generale-della-curia-romana.html> (05.12.2025); *Secretariat of State*, Rescriptum ex Audientia SS.mi Il Santo Padre. Prot. N. 64.514/P (18 October 2007), in: *ULSA Bollettino* 15 (2007), at: http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/labour_office/docs/documents/ulsava_b19_7_it.html (02.12.2025); *Secretariat of State*, Il Santo Padre (1 March 2008), in: *Communicationes* 40 (2008) 81-82; *Secretariat of State*, Aggiornamento del Mansionario della Curia Romana. Prot. N. 115.002/A (10 July 2009) in: AAS 10 (2009) 741-753; *Secretariat of State*, Rescriptum ex Audientia SS.mi Il Santo Padre. Prot. N. 159006/G.N. (28 November 2011), in: ULSA Bollettino 19 (2011), at: <https://www.ulsava.it/pubblicazioni/bollettini/bollettino-n--19---2011/atti-di-sua-santita-benedetto-xvi/integrazione-del-regolamento-generale-della-curia-romana-con-il-.html> (02.12.2025); *Francis*, Litterae Apostolicae Motu Proprio Datae La fedeltà (26 April 2021) in: AAS 113 (2021) 441-444; *Secretariat of State*, Rescriptum ex Audientia SS.mi Sua Santità Francesco (1 March 2022) in: AAS 114 (2022) 347-349. With regard to the structure, procedures, internal relations, and official acts of the Curia, only one change was made. See: *Secretariat of State*, Rescriptum ex Audientia SS.mi Il Santo Padre (7 February 2011) in: AAS 103 (2011) 127-128.

5 *Francis*, Chirograph of the Holy Father Relating to the Institution of the Interdicastery Commission for the Revision of the General Regulations of the Roman Curia (5 May 2022), in: Bulletin of the Holy See Press Office, 5 May 2022, at: <https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/it/bollettino/pubblico/2026/01/10/0028/00056.html> (05.12.2025).

6 More extensive reflections on the reform of the Roman Curia under *Praedicate Evangelium* can be found, for example, in: *Ambrose, Merlin Rengith*, *Praedicate Evangelium: The Task Accomplished and Ahead*, in: NomoK@non (2022), at: <https://doi.org/10.5282/nomokanon/218>; *Berkmann, Burkhard Josef*, Subsidiarität und Dezentralisierung bei der Reform der Römischen Kurie, in: NomoK@non (2023), at: <https://doi.org/10.5282/nomokanon/239>; *Del Pozzo, Massimo*, Una lettura "strutturale" di "Praedicate Evangelium", in: *Stato, Chiese e pluralismo confessionale* 13 (2022) 47-94; *Ghirlanda, Gianfranco*, La cost. ap. Praedicate evangelium sulla Curia Romana, in: *Periodica de re canonica* 111 (2022) 355-420; *Thengumpally, Shaji George*, Apostolic Constitution Praedicate Evangelium – A New Vision on Church Administration, in: *Iustitia* 14 (2023) 49-62; Viana, Antonio / *Berkmann, Burkhard*, Die Leitungsgewalt der Römischen Kurie gemäß der Apostolischen Konstitution Praedicate Evangelium, in: NomoK@non (2023), at: <https://doi.org/10.5282/nomokanon/237>.

The new Regulations form part of a broader administrative reform under Leo XIV. On 6 November 2025, the Secretariat of State announced in a circular letter⁷ that the Pope would convene an extraordinary consistory on 7 and 8 January 2026, in accordance with canon 353 § 3, which provides for such a meeting when particular needs of the Church or the treatment of more serious matters call for collegial action. As expected, the consistory was not convened for the creation of new cardinals, since the number of cardinal electors already exceeded the canonical limit of 120⁸. Instead, it took the form of a consultative assembly, during which the Pope sought the advice of the full College of Cardinals. Pope Francis had convened three extraordinary consistories during his pontificate, in 2014, 2015 and 2022; the most recent of these, however, was structured primarily around language groups, leaving limited scope for open discussion in plenary session. By convoking an extraordinary consistory at the very beginning of his pontificate, Leo XIV, much like Francis at the outset of his own pontificate, returned to the practice of his predecessors Paul VI, John Paul II and Benedict XVI, who regularly gathered the College of Cardinals for broad and open deliberation. The choice of 7 January, immediately following the conclusion of the Jubilee Year 2025, also confirmed the Pope's broader pattern of deferring major policy initiatives until after the Holy Year.

What follows is a systematic comparison between the new regulations promulgated by Pope Leo XIV and the regulations that had been in force since 1999 under Pope John Paul II. The analysis examines to what extent *Praedicate Evangelium* influenced the revision and how this Apostolic Constitution is reflected in the concrete provisions that will shape the daily functioning of the Roman Curia in the future.

2 A New Framework and a Renewed Terminology

The revision of the *Regolamento Generale della Curia Romana* in 2025 constitutes, as already noted, the most far-reaching update of the Regulations governing the Roman Curia since the promulgation of its previous version in 1999. Whereas the Regulations issued by John Paul II were still fully rooted in the institutional framework of *Pastor Bonus*⁹, the new Regulations promulgated by Pope Leo XIV are grounded in the theological principles of *Praedicate Evangelium*. This more recent Apostolic Constitution, founded on the Church's missionary nature, directing all structures toward evangelisation, emphasises a synodal style of governance centred on cooperation, listening, and communal discernment. Although many provisions remain unchanged, the shift in underlying orientation becomes clear in the subtler developments introduced through the revised terminology. In this light, the 2025 Regulations reworks the vocabulary of its predecessor at several key points in order to align it more closely with *Praedicate Evangelium* and its renewed way of describing the Curia.

⁷ At present, the circular letter itself has not been made publicly available. However, press releases from the Holy See show that the consistory did in fact take place in the second week of 2026. See: *Leo XIV*, Parole 'a braccio' al termine della prima sessione del Concistoro Straordinario (8 January 2026), in: Bulletin of the Holy See Press Office, 8 January 2026, at: <https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/it/bollettino/pubblico/2026/01/08/0021/00044.html> (14.01.2026); *Leo XIV*, Intervento del Santo Padre alla conclusione del Concistoro Straordinario (7-8 gennaio 2026) (10 January 2026), in: Bulletin of the Holy See Press Office, 10 January 2026, at: <https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/it/bollettino/pubblico/2026/01/10/0028/00056.html> (30.01.2026).

⁸ This rule was first established in: *Paul VI*, Apostolic Constitution Romano Pontifici Eligendo (1 October 1975) in: AAS 67 (1975) 609-645. See in particular: n. 30, p. 622. It was later confirmed in: *John Paul II*, Apostolic Constitution Universi Dominici Gregis (22 February 1996), in: AAS 88 (1996) 305-343. See in particular: n. 33, p. 321.

⁹ *John Paul II*, Apostolic Constitution Pastor Bonus (28 June 1988), in: AAS 80 (1988) 841-930. Hereinafter referred to as: PB.

First, both the terminology and the scope of application of the Regulations are now framed differently¹⁰. Under *Pastor Bonus*, the generic term “dicasteries” already covered the Secretariat of State, Congregations, Tribunals, Councils and Offices (PB art. 2 §§ 1-2), while the Prefecture of the Papal Household and the Office for the Liturgical Celebrations of the Supreme Pontiff were treated separately as institutes (PB art. 2 §§ 3). *Praedicate Evangelium* reorders this framework by providing that the Roman Curia is composed of the Secretariat of State, the dicasteries and the other institutions (of justice and of finance), all juridically equal, and by specifying that the expression “curial institutions” refers only to those units (PE art. 12 §§ 1-2). The Offices, by contrast, are listed separately in PE art. 12 § 3 and therefore do not fall under the term “curial institutions”. The 2025 Regulations adopt this distinction explicitly by applying “to the curial institutions and offices which make up the Roman Curia”, and by defining “curial institutions” as the Secretariat of State, the dicasteries, the institutions of justice and the institutions of finance (RG/25 art. 1 §§ 1-2). The terminological shift therefore lies not in the mere replacement of one exhaustive list by another, but in the fact that “dicastery”, which in *Pastor Bonus* could still function as a common umbrella term for the Secretariat of State, Congregations, Tribunals, Councils and Offices, no longer serves that role; instead, “curial institution” becomes the overarching category for the entities mentioned in PE art. 12 § 1, while the Offices remain outside it. In this respect, the 2025 framework develops the terminological logic of *Praedicate Evangelium* more precisely than the 1999 Regulations, which still spoke of “dicasteries and organisms” (RG/99 art. 1 § 1).

The designation “dicastery” as the newly chosen term grouping the former congregations and pontifical councils entails both an advantage and a drawback¹¹. According to Antonio Viana, the advantage is that this term better reflects the equality among dicasteries as formulated in PE, art. 12 § 1, an equality that excludes mutual subordination and assures direct dependence upon the Roman Pontiff, without prejudice to coordination that may be entrusted to the Secretariat of State. The drawback is that “dicastery” could no longer serve, as it did in *Pastor Bonus*, as the common term for all curial entities. Since *Praedicate Evangelium* now reserves “dicastery” for a specific group, a new generic terminology had to be adopted. Article 12 § 2 of *Praedicate Evangelium* therefore selects the term “curial institution”. In practice, continuing the traditional generic use of “dicastery” in appropriate contexts need not be disastrous, even if it no longer includes all curial entities¹². The 2025 Regulations themselves mitigate the rigidity of the new classification: unless the context indicates otherwise, the terms “dicasteries” and “interdicasterial” are to be understood as referring to all curial institutions (RG/25 art. 1 § 3), extending an equalising technique already present in the 1999 Regulations (RG/99 art. 6).

In other parts of the new Regulations as well, the terminology is simplified and modernised. A second cluster of changes concerns the naming of titles, which are subtly adjusted. A good example is that instead of “Sommo Pontefice” (Supreme Pontiff), the term “Romano Pontefice” (Roman Pontiff) is now used (RG/25 art. 3 § 1; 4 § 1; 5; 7 § 1; 9 §§ 1 and 3; 14; 15; 18; 20 § 2; 22; 24; 28; 30 § 2; 31 §§ 1, 2, 3 and 4; 32 §§ 1, 3 and 4; 33 §§ 1 and 2; 36 § 2; 37 § 6; 40 § 4; 47 cf.;

¹⁰ As for the changed nomenclature, see for example: *Del Pozzo*, Una lettura (note 6) 57-62; *Ganarin, Manuel*, La Costituzione Apostolica *Praedicate Evangelium* di Papa Francesco, in: L-JUS 5/1 (2022) 64. See in particular footnote 23; *Viana, Antonio*, Novedades de la *Praedicate Evangelium* en cuanto a la terminología, distribución de competencias y actividad administrativa, in: *Ius Canonicum* 126 (2023) 519-520.

¹¹ Cf. *Ekpo, Anthony*, *The Roman Curia: History, Theology, and Organization*, Washington D.C. 2024, 21-22.

¹² Cf. *Viana*, *Novedades* (note 10) 519-520.

RG/99 art. 1 § 3; 9 § 1; 42; 50; 98 § 1; 99 § 1; 101; 103 § 1; 105 §§ 1 and 3; 109; 110; 113 § 1; 115 § 2; 117; 119; 123; 125 § 2; 126 §§ 1, 2, 3 and 4; 127 § 1; 130 § 2; 131 § 6; 134 § 4; 141), although it should be noted that the term "*Romano Pontefice*" was already used sporadically in the 1999 Regulations (RG/99 art. 31 § 1; 41 § 1; 127 § 2).

Another example is the disappearance of the term "*prelates superior of the Roman Curia*" (RG/99 art. 3-4; see also art. 81 § 1, 118, 121 § 2). This category is no longer used in the 2025 *Regolamento*. This corresponds to *Praedicate Evangelium*, which speaks of the prefect (or equivalent), the secretary, and the undersecretary as the governing officers of a curial institution – who, besides clerics, may also be laypersons – but no longer employs "*prelate superior*" as a standing juridical designation (PE art. 13-14). Although the 1999 Regulations already used this term, the 2025 Regulations refer much more consistently to the "*head*" of dicasteries and curial institutions.

A further, very explicit terminological development is the way the Particular Churches are named. The 1999 Regulations simply speak of "*dioceses*" and "*Particular Churches*" in the provisions on the competence of dicasteries and on *ad limina* visits (RG/99 art. 123, 139-143; cf. PB art. 32). Notably, explicit references to the Eastern Catholic Churches were largely absent both in *Pastor Bonus* and in the 1999 Regulations. The 2025 Regulations add an interpretative clause at the very beginning: "*References to dioceses, servatis de iure servandis, are to be understood as applicable to eparchies*" (RG/25 art. 1 § 4). This explicit inclusion of eparchies structurally reflects *Praedicate Evangelium's* stronger insistence on the full integration of the Eastern Catholic Churches into the ordinary scope of curial service.

3 Separate Personnel Regulations

A second notable innovation in the 2025 *Regolamento* is its revised structure. The 1999 Regulations consisted of one extensive text divided into two parts, entitled respectively: "*Personnel and Structure of the Dicasteries of the Roman Curia*" and "*General Procedural Norms*". In addition to several general provisions, this first part, which comprised the first 97 articles, contained all labour-related and personnel regulations. Among other things, it addressed matters such as recruitment, functions, mobility, disciplinary measures, working hours, leave, sick-leave procedures, and pension rights. As a result, organisational, administrative, and labour-law norms were interwoven.

In the new *Regolamento Generale della Curia Romana* of 2025, this conflation is broken. The document is limited to the structure, procedures, internal relationships and official acts of the Curia. Only the general provision on working hours is retained: institutions must provide a minimum of thirty-six hours per week, with the possibility (via the Secretariat of State and the Secretariat for the Economy) of allowing variations in how these hours are arranged (art. 2 RG/25). All personnel-related rules have been removed from the general text and placed in a separate *Regolamento del Personale della Curia Romana*, which was signed and promulgated by the Pope together with the new general regulation.

Through this clear separation, the functioning of the Roman Curia is rationalised and a clearer, more consistent, and better-structured system emerges, one that aligns more closely with the norms of modern (secular) administrative law. In this way, the intention of *Praedicate Evangelium* to adapt the functioning of the Roman Curia to contemporary needs is put into practice, giving

effect to the greater efficiency, transparency, and sustainability announced in the 2022 *Chirograph*.

In this article, the labour-law and personnel regulations will be set aside, and the focus will be on comparing the provisions concerning the structure, procedures, internal relationships and official acts of the Curia in the old and new versions of the regulation.

4 Synodality as a Mode of Governance

Another innovation becomes apparent in the provisions concerning interdicasterial consultation structures and internal decision-making within the curial institutions. These provisions concern meetings of cardinals and heads of curial institutions (Title II, art. 3-4), Interdicasterial Meetings (Title III, art. 5-16), Plenary and Ordinary Sessions of the Dicasteries (Title IV, art. 17-22), the Congress of a Dicastery (Title V, art. 23-25), and the Consulta of a Dicastery (Title VI, art. 26-27). Although a large number of canons in this section have been incorporated almost *verbatim* from the old *Regolamento*, several significant adjustments can be noted.

While the provision stating that the cardinals assist the Pope in his tasks and, at his command, convene in ordinary and extraordinary consistories has been taken over almost word for word from the old Regulations (RG/25 art. 3; cf. RG/99 art. 98), a first change stands out in the provision of the meetings of the heads of the curial institutions. Whereas the 1999 Regulations still referred to meetings convened “*several times a year*” by the cardinal Secretary of State for coordination and the sharing of information (RG/99 art. 99), these meetings must now take place “*regularly*” and are given precisely defined aims, such as discussing work programmes and their implementation, coordinating common work, sharing information, examining matters of greater significance in order to formulate advice and suggestions, and drafting proposals and decisions to be submitted to the Pope. Moreover, these meetings are explicitly integrated into the new vision of the Curia by referring to *Praedicate Evangelium* art. 34 § 2 (RG/25 art. 4).

A similar development is visible in the provisions on interdicasterial meetings (RG/25 art. 5-16; cf. RG/99 art. 101-111). The basic structure and procedures remain recognisable, but the organisation and conduct of interdicasterial meetings are addressed in greater detail. In general, it is stated that the heads of two or more dicasteries address matters of common importance in interdicasterial meetings in accordance with article 28 of *Praedicate Evangelium*. Whereas *Pastor Bonus* merely stated that matters concerning several dicasteries were to be handled jointly (PB art. 21 § 1; cf. PE art. 28 § 1), *Praedicate Evangelium* specifies that the dicastery that first receives a dossier is obliged to convene an interdicasterial meeting (PE art. 28 § 2) and that a plenary session must take place when the nature of the dossier requires it (PE art. 28 § 3).

The provisions concerning other interdicasterial commissions (RG/25 art. 14-16; cf. RG/99 art. 109-111) are also more strictly regulated. Although they are taken over almost *verbatim* from the previous regulation, they simultaneously receive a broader and more concrete meaning. The new Regulations no longer refer to article 21 of *Pastor Bonus*, but to article 28 § 5 of *Praedicate Evangelium* (RG/25 art. 15-16; cf. RG/99 art. 109-110). While *Pastor Bonus* already provided the possibility of establishing such commissions “*where needed*” (PB art. 21 § 2), *Praedicate Evangelium* makes this more concrete: when it is deemed necessary to establish an interdicasterial commission to deal with matters requiring mutual and frequent consultation, the head of the dicastery that first initiated or first received the matter must, with the prior approval of the Pope,

establish a special interdicasterial commission (PE art. 28 § 5). Article 120 of *Praedicate Evangelium* is also cited, which provides that within the Dicastery for the Clergy an interdicasterial commission for the Formation of Candidates for Holy Orders is established, with the prefect serving *ex officio* as president (RG/25 art. 14).

At the same time, the procedure to be followed in all interdicasterial meetings is clarified, including provisions regarding the lack of voting rights for undersecretaries (RG/25 art. 7 § 4; cf. RG/99 art. 103 § 4) and the order of interventions (RG/25 art. 8 § 3; cf. RG/99 art. 104 § 3). The earlier provision that these norms also apply to “*other curial institutions and the meetings between them*” (RG/99 art. 12) is not repeated, likely due to the modified institutional structure introduced by *Praedicate Evangelium* (cf. *supra*).

The same pattern is visible in the provisions concerning the internal decision-making bodies of the dicasteries (RG/25 art. 17-27). Plenary and ordinary sessions of the dicasteries, which were previously held only “*as needed*” (RG/99 art. 112), must now take place at least once every two years, unless the dicastery’s own *Ordo servandus* provides otherwise (RG/25 art. 17). The Congress of a dicastery is composed of the head of the dicastery, the secretary, the undersecretary, the office heads and, at the discretion of the head of the dicastery, other officials, unless otherwise provided for individual dicasteries. This Congress retains its central responsibilities for handling dossiers and preparing decisions (cf. RG/99 art. 118-120; RG/25 art. 23-25), but its composition is modernised: the rank of *Prelato Superiore* disappears (RG/99 art. 118), and the secretary and undersecretary act as the Prefect’s direct collaborators (RG/25 art. 23). The dicastery for Legislative Texts is also more explicitly involved in legal interpretations (RG/25 art. 25), with reference to article 76 of *Praedicate Evangelium*.

Finally, the *consulta* remains largely unchanged as an advisory body, but here too the chairmanship shifts from the *Prelato Superiore* to the secretary (RG/25 art. 26; cf. RG/99 art. 121), while retaining the possibility of consulting external experts (RG/25 art. 27; cf. RG/99 art. 122).

From the foregoing, it appears that the existing provisions concerning consistories, interdicasterial consultation structures, and internal decision-making within the curial institutions are largely preserved in the 2025 Regulations. Although a number of targeted interventions aim to align consultation and decision-making more closely with the synodal and collegial governance model of *Praedicate Evangelium*, some rules remain rather general. It is possible that the drafters feared that an overly detailed elaboration might hinder smooth implementation or prove difficult to enforce. More specific rules, however, may be developed in the *ordo servandus* of the various dicasteries.

5 Competences of Curial Institutions

One of the most substantively sensitive parts of the Regulations concerns the articles on the competences and tasks of the curial institutions. It is striking, however, that the provisions on the competences and tasks of the curial institutions (RG/25 art. 28-35; cf. RG/99 art. 123-129) have remained virtually unchanged in substance.

The text was only adjusted terminologically to the new institutional framework of *Praedicate Evangelium*. In addition to the references to *Pastor Bonus* – which are naturally replaced here, too, by references to *Praedicate Evangelium* – the terminology now consistently uses “*curial*

institution" instead of "*dicastery*". This shift reflects the broader restructuring of the Roman Curia, in which not only dicasteries but also other entities are brought together under the heading of "*curial institutions*" (cf. *supra*). The enumeration of the core tasks: (a) handling matters reserved to the Holy See; (b) dealing with issues that exceed the competence of individual bishops; (c) studying urgent challenges in consultation with the Particular Churches; (d) promoting initiatives for the good of the Universal Church; and (e) deciding matters that the faithful directly submit to the Holy See, remains word-for-word identical to the previous text (RG/25 art. 28; cf. RG/99 art. 123). The continuity of these provisions underscores that the reform of the Roman Curia in *Praedicate Evangelium* does not aim to rewrite the substantive mission of the institutions, but rather to structure their functioning within a redesigned administrative framework.

Other provisions under this title also display a high degree of substantive continuity. The requirement to handle matters in accordance with universal and particular law is taken over almost *verbatim* (RG/25 art. 29; cf. RG/99 art. 124). New in comparison with the 1999 Regulations is article 32 of the 2025 edition, which adds a detailed procedure for requesting special faculties. Yet this text is itself almost entirely taken from article 126 *bis*, which had been inserted into the 1999 *Regolamento* on 7 February 2011¹³. This article introduces a clearly defined and multilayered procedure for requesting special faculties from the Pope. A curial institution that considers such faculties necessary must now submit a fully developed and legally substantiated dossier via the Secretariat of State, including a final draft of the proposed text and a justification of the requested derogations from canon law (§ 1). The Secretariat of State plays a central coordinating role: it gathers the necessary opinions from the competent curial institutions, from the Dicastery for Legislative Texts, and, where needed, from the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith (§ 2). On the basis of these consultations a dossier is assembled for submission to the Pope, consisting of the original request, the opinions received, any revised version of the text, and the report of the audience (§ 3). When the Pope grants the requested faculties, the Secretariat of State ensures that the relevant institutions are informed and decides, together with the requesting dicastery, on any publication (§ 4). This new provision increases transparency, legal rigour and interdicasterial coordination in decision-making on special faculties. The *Regolamento* thus introduces a more precise and structured administrative process than the 1999 regulation, which contained no equivalent article.

The provisions on extraordinary matters and decisions of greater importance also remain essentially the same, but are supplemented with an obligation to conduct periodic evaluations of special faculties granted to prefects (RG/25 art. 33; cf. RG/99 art. 127). In this regard, explicit reference is made to *Praedicate Evangelium* art. 31 § 3, which stipulates that the prefect or his equivalent must regularly review with the Pope the extent to which these special faculties are effective, feasible and practically workable within the Roman Curia, and whether they remain suitable for the Universal Church. These innovations illustrate an increased emphasis on transparency, uniformity and legal certainty in curial decision-making.

What emerges from the 2025 *Regolamento* regarding the powers of curial institutions is therefore a twofold movement: on the one hand, the substance of the 1999 provisions is largely preserved, so that the fundamental mission and juridical logic of the curial institutions remain unchanged. On the other hand, these provisions are adapted, refined and expanded in line with

¹³ *Secretariat of State*, Rescriptum ex Audientia SS.mi Il Santo Padre (7 February 2011) in: AAS 103 (2011) 127-128.

the new administrative vision of *Praedicate Evangelium*. That vision places greater emphasis on synodality, collegiality, transparency and interdicasterial cooperation, which is reflected in more detailed procedures, stronger internal coordination and a clearer structuring of competences. As a result, the 2025 *Regolamento* does not represent a substantive break with the past, but rather a significant modernisation and systematisation of how curial institutions carry out their tasks within the reformed curial landscape.

6 A New System for the Coordination of the Curial Institutions

The provisions on the coordination of the curial institutions (RG/25 Title VIII, art. 36) constitute another area in which innovation becomes visible. The 1999 Regulations assigned a prominent role to the Council of Cardinals for the study of organisational and economic matters (RG/99 art. 130 § 1; cf. PB art.100). Pope Francis abolished this body as part of the reform of the Holy See's economic structures and replaced it with the Secretariat for the Economy¹⁴. Accordingly, this council no longer appears in the 2025 Regulations: it no longer provides for a separate economic advisory body. Instead, the new Regulations describe a system that regulates coordination among the curial institutions at three levels: the consistory, the meeting of the heads of the curial institutions, and the interdicasterial meetings (RG/25 art. 36 § 1).

In addition, the role of the Secretariat of State is significantly strengthened and further centralised. Henceforth, at the Pope's direction, it is responsible for coordinating all dicasteries, organisms and offices of the Roman Curia, as well as institutions connected with the Holy See. The Secretariat of State must ensure unity of policy, communicate necessary information to all concerned, and may take technical and organisational initiatives affecting the entire Curia (RG/25 art. 36 § 2; cf. RG/99 art. 130 § 2). In effect, this replaces the earlier model in which economic coordination still rested with a collegial advisory body.

Finally, it is stipulated that documents and decisions of a general nature, prepared by one or more curial institutions, must be communicated to other relevant institutions so that they may submit comments and so that a coherent implementation can be ensured (RG/25 art. 36 § 3; cf. RG/99 art. 130 § 3). This creates a horizontal coordination framework that was largely absent in the 1999 version.

7 Documents and Appeal Procedures: Increased Legal Certainty

In the new Regulations, clear importance is attached to legal precision and to a professional functioning of the Roman Curia. This is most evident in the provisions on the preparation and publication of documents (Title IX, art. 37-38), the preparation of individual administrative acts (Title X, art. 39), and the procedure for handling appeals (Title XI, art. 40-44).

The 2025 Regulations preserve the structure of the 1999 version but introduce several targeted changes to the procedure for drafting and publishing documents. For example, the drafting process is made more flexible by stipulating that consultation of the Congress is required only where this body actually exists (RG/25 art. 37 § 4; cf. RG/99 art. 131 § 4). References to competent

¹⁴ Francis, *Litterae Apostolicae Motu Proprio Datae Fidelis Dispensator et Prudens* (24 February 2014), in: AAS 106 (2014) 164-165.

bodies are, naturally, updated: documents concerning faith and morals must now be submitted to the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith, and all documents of a normative character to the Dicastery for Legislative Texts, with this category expanded. Whereas previously only “*general executive decrees or instructions*” were mentioned, the new text refers more broadly to documents “*of a normative character*” (RG/25, art. 37 § 5; cf. RG/99, art. 131 § 5). The collegial approval procedure is also tightened: it applies only when the document is prepared by a dicastery (RG/25, art. 37 § 6; cf. RG/99, art. 131 § 6). Finally, communication regarding new documents is restructured: the Holy See Press Office is no longer mentioned as the primary body responsible for public presentation, since this task is now carried out in cooperation with the Dicastery for Communication (RG/25, art. 37 § 8; cf. RG/99, art. 131 § 8). The separate article from the 1999 Regulations allowing the same procedure to be applied to other documents (RG/99, art. 132) is removed entirely, as the new article 37 already covers this implicitly.

Compared with the 1999 version of the Regulations, the 2025 Regulations modify the provision on the preparation of individual administrative acts only in a few respects. The general content remains essentially identical: competent curial institutions must set out in their own internal norms the procedure they follow when issuing individual administrative acts, in accordance with canon law and, where necessary, after consulting the competent ordinaries and, where appropriate, the papal representative (RG/25, art. 39; cf. RG/99, art. 133). The Regulations itself refers, somewhat imprecisely, to “*rescripts, favors, dispensations, authorizations, licenses, and other administrative acts*”, although strictly speaking rescript denotes the form of the act, while dispensations and other favors refer to its content. The changes are primarily terminological. Thus, the term “*Proper Regulations*” is replaced by “*Proper Ordo servandus*”, aligning with the broader technical restructuring of internal procedures. Moreover, the phrase “*proper ordinaries*” from 1999 becomes “*interested ordinaries*”, which slightly broadens the scope but does not substantively change the requirement of consultation. The wording of the list of administrative acts remains otherwise unchanged, apart from minimal reordering.

Regarding the handling of appeals, the core principles remain the same: administrative acts must be prepared according to the norms of canon law, may not contain deviations from universal legislation without specific approval, and may be subject to appeal before the Apostolic Signatura when they violate procedure or law. Nonetheless, the 2025 Regulations introduces several targeted – mainly procedural and terminological – changes. A first difference is that, as elsewhere in the new regulation, the term “*dicasteries*” is replaced by “*curial institutions*”. In the context of appeals, however, this affects the scope of application, which becomes more uniform or at least clearer (RG/25, art. 41 § 1; 42 § 4; 43 § 1; cf. RG/99, art. 135 § 1; 136 § 4; 137 § 1). In addition, the deadline for filing a recourse with the Apostolic Signatura is set at 60 useful days (RG/25, art. 41 § 2; cf. RG/99, art. 135 § 2). Although the previous Regulations mentioned a period of 30 days, the 60-day term had already been established in art. 34 § 1 of the 2008 *Lex Propria* of the Apostolic Signatura, *Antiqua Ordinatione*¹⁵ and is now incorporated into the new Regulation. Legal references are also updated: both in describing the competence of curial institutions (RG/25, art. 42 § 1; cf. RG/99, art. 136 § 1) and in the right to legal assistance (RG/25, art. 44 § 1; cf. RG/99, art. 138 § 1). Further, the provision concerning labour-law appeals is expanded with a reference to the *Regolamento del Personale della Curia Romana* (RG/25, art. 42 § 5), and it is

¹⁵ *Benedict XIV*, Litterae Apostolicae Motu Proprio Datae Antiqua Ordinatione (21 June 2008), in: AAS 100 (2008) 513-538.

clarified that a request for reconsideration must be submitted to the same institution that issued the decision (RG/25, art. 41 § 1; cf. RG/99, art. 135 § 1).

8 Relations with the Particular Churches

While the provisions on the relations of the Curia with the Particular Churches and the *ad limina* visits (Title XII, art. 45-49) remain almost word-for-word the same in the new Regulations, a subtle yet meaningful development does occur. The influence of *Praedicate Evangelium* becomes apparent in the more explicit emphasis on cooperation with the papal representatives: whereas the old Regulations still referred to article 27 of *Pastor Bonus*, the new Regulations refers to the corresponding provision in article 37 of *Praedicate Evangelium* (RG/25 art. 49; cf. RG/99 art. 143). According to this article of *Praedicate Evangelium*, the Curia is obliged not only to inform the Nunciatures, but also the Episcopal Conferences and the hierarchical structures of the Eastern Churches, marking a shift from a purely diplomatic channel to a broader, more synodal culture of consultation. This shift shows that the 2025 revision is more than a technical update: it repositions the Curia within the global Church.

In addition, the new Regulations, as already noted earlier, devote noticeably more attention to the Eastern Catholic Churches, demonstrating that the universal legislator is well aware of their distinct character.

9 Language, Archives and Information Systems

Finally, the provisions on the languages used (Title XIII, art. 50), archives and protocol (Title XIV, art. 51), and information systems (Title XV, art. 52) reflect a modernization of ecclesiastical regulation.

The use of Latin as the ordinary language of curial documents is retained, although the new wording corresponds more closely to contemporary practice. In the previous Regulations, it was explicitly stated that documents were generally to be drawn up in Latin, while the use of modern languages – both for correspondence and for drafting documents – was allowed only as an additional possibility. In the new Regulations, this formulation is relaxed by stating that curial institutions generally draw up their acts in Latin or in another modern language (RG/25 art. 50 § 1; cf. RG/99 art. 144 § 1). The Office for the Latin Language of the Secretariat of State, which can assist curial institutions in drafting documents in Latin, is nevertheless retained (RG/25 art. 50 § 2; cf. RG/99 art. 144 § 2), as is the obligation to translate documents intended for publication into “*the most widely used languages today*” (RG/25 art. 50 § 3; cf. RG/99 art. 144 § 3). The new provision shows respect for the tradition of Latin, while at the same time responding more accurately to practical reality: in many curial contexts today, documents are drafted in other languages (especially Italian, English, or Spanish), and Latin is no longer the standard or mandatory starting point.

The differences are greater in the provisions concerning archives: the reference to the former *Archivio Segreto Vaticano* is replaced with the new official name *Archivio Apostolico Vaticano* (RG/99 art. 145; RG/25 art. 51). This name change was made on 13 March 2019 by

decree of Pope Francis¹⁶. The change was introduced because the Latin word *secretum*, originally meaning “private” or “reserved to the Pope”, was increasingly understood in modern languages as “secret” in the sense of hidden or inaccessible. This negative connotation did not correspond to the actual mission of the archive, which is open to researchers and seeks to serve the Church and culture. With Vatican Apostolic Archives, Pope Francis opts for a name that avoids misunderstanding while expressing more clearly the apostolic and papal character of the archive.

The rules concerning archives, protocol and information systems remain largely the same, but in 2025 they are more tightly aligned with contemporary standards for security and record-keeping. The most significant modernisation concerns information systems: whereas the 1999 version of the Regulations limited themselves to a brief and cautious provision on the use of modern communication tools “with criteria of economy and solely for official reasons” (RG/99 art. 146 § 2), the 2025 Regulations introduce an entirely new article subjecting the acquisition and use of IT systems to procurement rules and technical validation by the Secretariat for the Economy (RG/25 art. 52). In this way, digitalisation is, for the first time, fully integrated into the administrative practice of the Curia.

10 Conclusion

The revised *Regolamento Generale della Curia Romana*, promulgated by Pope Leo XIV in November 2025, represents the most significant normative update to the internal governance of the Roman Curia since 1999. Its publication marks the completion of a process initially set in motion by Pope Francis with *Praedicate Evangelium*, an apostolic constitution that reconceptualised the Roman Curia as an instrument of evangelisation, synodality, and service to both the Pope and the bishops. Although *Praedicate Evangelium* provided the theological and institutional framework for reform, it did not offer detailed operational norms. The 2025 Regulations now address this gap by translating the broader ecclesiological vision into concrete legal norms. In doing so, they create a more coherent, transparent, and contemporary administrative structure that reflects both continuity with past curial practice and an unmistakable shift in orientation.

A first major conclusion concerns the deeper reframing of the Curia’s identity. The changes in terminology, the disappearance of certain categories and titles and the explicit integration of Eastern Catholic Churches are not minor editorial adjustments. They reflect a theological repositioning rooted in Vatican II’s understanding of communion and mission. With these changes, the Curia is normatively defined not as a bureaucratic apparatus standing between the Pope and the bishops, but as a body at the service of both, and fundamentally oriented toward proclaiming the Gospel. The Regulations thus subtly but firmly embed *Praedicate Evangelium*’s missionary and synodal vision within the daily functioning of the Curia.

A second major development lies in the structural reorganisation of the regulatory corpus. By separating all labour-law norms into a new *Regolamento del Personale della Curia Romana*, the 2025 Regulations create a more streamlined, rational, and modern administrative legal

¹⁶ Francis, *Litterae Apostolicae Motu Proprio Datae L’esperienza storica* (22 October 2019), in: *Communicationes* 51 (2019) 358-361.

framework. Whereas the 1999 Regulations interwove institutional procedures with employment matters, the new framework follows clearer juridical logic and mirrors contemporary standards of public administration. This consolidation not only enhances legal transparency but also facilitates future adaptation, since personnel policies can now evolve independently of institutional regulations. This structural clarity itself manifests the reform's intention: to improve efficiency, accountability, and coherence within the Curia.

A third conclusion concerns the strengthening of synodal governance. Although many procedural norms – such as those governing plenary sessions, the Congress of dicasteries, and interdicasterial meetings – are inherited from the previous Regulations, the revisions introduce a distinct shift in tone and expectations. Interdicasterial meetings must now occur regularly and with defined purposes, the convening of such meetings is often obligatory rather than discretionary, and special commissions are regulated according to the more concrete criteria introduced by *Praedicate Evangelium*. Similarly, dicasteries are now required to hold plenary sessions at least biennially, unless otherwise specified. These revisions do not radically alter curial procedure, but they inject into the structure an expectation of coordination, transparency and participation. Synodality thus becomes not merely an ecclesiological ideal but an operative mode of governance.

Related to this is the modernisation of internal coordination mechanisms. Title VIII replaces the old Council of Cardinals for Economic Affairs, abolished under Pope Francis, with an integrated system centred on the Secretariat of State, interdicasterial meetings, and the consistory. The Secretariat of State acquires a more explicitly coordinating role across all curial institutions. While some may interpret this as a return to centralisation, the Regulations frame this enhanced role as a means of ensuring unity of policy and communication across a more diversified curial landscape. In effect, coordination no longer depends on *ad hoc* collaboration or informal networks but is grounded more in explicit legal mandates.

Another important area of development involves legal certainty and procedural consolidation. The provisions concerning the preparation of normative documents, individual administrative acts, and appeals have been modernised with more precise terminology, updated references to the competent curial institutions, and more consistent procedural formulations. With regard to appeals, the Regulations now provide for a period of 60 useful days to file a recourse before the Apostolic Signatura, replacing the 30-day period mentioned in the 1999 Regulations and bringing the text into line with the 2008 *Lex Propria* of the Apostolic Signatura (*Antiqua Ordinatione*). The detailed procedure for requesting special faculties, elevated from a 2011 amendment into the previous Regulations, illustrates a broader trend: the Curia's administrative practice is being standardised, documented, and made more transparent. Even where the substance of the earlier Regulations remains largely unchanged, the 2025 revision embeds these practices within a clearer and more coherent legal architecture.

In relation to the Particular Churches, the new Regulations maintain continuity with earlier norms but subtly expand the framework of consultation and communication. The reference to article 37 of *Praedicate Evangelium* signals that the Curia's relationship is not limited to episcopal *ad limina* visits or communication via papal representatives. Instead, it must include coordinated exchanges with episcopal conferences and the hierarchical structures of the Eastern Catholic Churches. This is a small but meaningful step toward a more collegial and less centralised ecclesial culture.

Finally, the Regulations demonstrate a notable commitment to modernisation in the areas of language, archives, and information systems. The more flexible norms concerning Latin reflect real linguistic practice, the updated reference to the Vatican Apostolic Archives aligns the document with Francis' 2019 reform, and the new article on information systems incorporates digitalisation into the normative structure of curial governance for the first time. These changes reflect a Curia increasingly aware of its need to operate within global administrative and technological standards.

Taken together, the 2025 *Regolamento Generale della Curia Romana* does not constitute a revolution in curial law, nor does it seek to reinvent the doctrinal mission or fundamental competencies of the Curia. Instead, it represents a systematic consolidation and modernisation of the Curia's internal governance in light of *Praedicate Evangelium*. It preserves continuity where continuity serves the Church's mission, but introduces targeted reforms where contemporary ecclesial life demands greater transparency, efficiency, or synodality. The Regulations are thus best understood as the juridical infrastructure necessary to implement the ecclesiological vision articulated by Pope Francis and now carried forward by Pope Leo XIV.

In this sense, the 2025 Regulations stand as a bridge: they connect the long-standing institutional tradition of the Roman Curia with a renewed missionary and synodal orientation for the twenty-first century. Their full significance will only become visible in practice: in how they shape curial culture, decision-making, and cooperation with the global Church. Yet as a normative foundation, they offer a coherent and forward-looking framework capable of sustaining the ongoing reform of the Curia, ensuring that its structures serve not themselves but the evangelising mission of the Church.