

Police Find Drugs in Raid of Vatican Apartment

Vatican police have reportedly raided a Vatican-owned apartment and arrested an aide to one of Pope Francis' key advisers.

Police in late June found widespread drug-use and men engaged in homosexual activity during the bust at the home owned by the Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, according to *Il Fatto Quotidiano*, an Italian newspaper that first reported the incident. Among its duties, the congregation guides the Church's response to clerical sexual abuse cases.

Authorities reportedly arrested the secretary of Cardinal Francesco Coccopalmerio, who was an occupant of the apartment, but official charges in connection with the incident have not been reported. Coccopalmerio, who serves as president of the Vatican's Pontifical Council for Legislative Texts and leads interpretations of the laws of the Church, is said to have recommended his secretary for a promotion to bishop.

Police were reportedly tipped off by neighbors, who complained of unusual behavior and "a constant coming and going" from the apartment.

The newspaper described the pope as "enraged," and said the aide was first taken to a clinic and hospitalized to detox from the drugs he had used, and "is currently in retreat at a convent in Italy."

This scandal comes on the heels of Cardinal George Pell's return to Australia to defend himself against charges related to multiple historical sex crimes. Pell, a top adviser to the pontiff, is the highest-ranking church official to face abuse allegations.

Days after granting Pell a release, Pope Francis also removed German Cardinal Gerhard Mueller as prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, according to *The Associated Press*. It is unclear if the reported drug arrest played any part in the pope's decision.

The pope has vowed a "zero tolerance" approach to abuse, but victim advocates

have said poor personnel decisions and the global abuse scandal reaching the heart of the Vatican has tainted his legacy.

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