

Faith Digest: Pope overhauls Vatican finances

February 28, 2014

Pope overhauls Vatican finances. Pope Francis launched a sweeping reform of the [Vatican's](#) scandal-plagued financial system by naming one of his closest advisers on reform, Australian Cardinal George Pell, to head a



powerful new department Federico Lombardi, the chief Vatican spokesman, briefs reporters about the new department Pope Francis created to overhaul the Holy See's finances. (RNS photo by David Gibson)that will oversee the entire management of the Holy See. The new Secretariat for the Economy, with Pell acting as a unique kind of Vatican comptroller, will have "authority over all economic and administrative activities" in the Vatican, according to a statement summarizing Francis' decree. The aim is to streamline a famously byzantine governance system by eliminating redundant offices, increasing accountability and financial safeguards, and generally bringing the Vatican into line with accepted accounting and procurement practices. This action is the most concrete step Francis has taken after a months-long review of the Curia, the centuries-old Vatican bureaucracy whose dysfunction and scandals helped push Pope Benedict XVI to resign the papacy a year ago.

Vatican City tops wine consumption. Tiny Vatican City consumes more

wine per capita than any other country in the world, according to information from the California-based Wine Institute. The Vatican consumed 74 liters of wine per person, around double the per-capita



consumption of Italy as a whole, the institute reported. A standard bottle of wine is about .75 liters. While some of that consumption clearly is related to ceremonial Communion wine, Italian press reports say it's more likely because the 800 Vatican residents are older (the lack of

children are figured into the statistics), are overwhelmingly male, are highly educated and tend to eat communally—all factors that tend to lead toward higher wine consumption.

Danish Jews and Muslims seek exemption to ban. Jewish and Muslim groups in Denmark have vowed to fight a new ban on the ritual slaughter of animals necessary to ensure kosher and halal meat, saying the law threatens their religious freedom. The Danish government approved a measure forbidding poultry and livestock to be killed without being “pre-stunned”—a method that ensures the animals are not awake when they are slaughtered. But according to Jewish and Muslim customs, animals must be conscious when killed in order to be considered kosher (Jewish) or halal (Muslim), although rules for Muslim slaughter are more lenient. Denmark is the latest European country to approve such a ban. Norway, Sweden and Switzerland passed laws forbidding ritual slaughter decades ago, and the Poles approved a ban in 2012. The Dutch Senate rejected a bill by the Party for the Animals that same year, while the British have refused to introduce such a bill in spite of intense lobbying by animal rights groups.