

CHURCH

Pope appoints Medjugorje nun as new deputy director of Vatican Press Office

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For Leo XIV, the time has come to tackle the communications dossier. The most expensive item in the Holy See's consolidated budget is one of the main headaches in the mind of the mathematician Pope. The issue arose forcefully before and after the

conclave, and in recent months, Prevost has ascertained that despite the large number of staff, things are not functioning properly. In recent weeks, the Pope has been focused on the project to overhaul the communications department, and the change of pace that many have been hoping for since the beginning of his pontificate now seems closer.

The first sign came yesterday with the appointment of a new deputy director of the Holy See Press Office. The choice of a nun, Nina Benedikta Krapić from Croatia, marks a return to the old ways. She will replace the Brazilian laywoman Cristiane Murray (pictured by Imagoeconomica), who was dismissed by the Pope in a private audience yesterday. Murray's replacement signals the end of an era.

In fact, Murray was appointed deputy director in July 2019 in anticipation of the Synod on the Amazon, which was scheduled for October of that year. This was a 'reward' for her work with the General Secretariat of the Synod of Bishops in preparing one of the most widely discussed events of Bergoglio's pontificate. Working as a journalist for Vatican Radio in Brazil, she became close to Cardinal Claudio Hummes, who inspired Francis' name and served as general rapporteur at the Synod on the Amazon. Cardinal Pedro Barreto even called her the co-founder of Repam, the network chaired by Hummes from which the project of the synodal journey of the Amazon originated.

A very specific profile and expression of that socio-ecological priority destined to end with Bergoglio's pontificate. In fact, it appears very different to that of her successor. Sister Krapić, who is thirty-six years old, is originally from the Archdiocese of Rijeka. She entered the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul after discovering her vocation in Medjugorje. A former theatre actress and radio journalist, the young director recounts how her colleagues at the radio station persuaded her to go on a pilgrimage. She went to Podbrdo to ask Our Lady for the gift of motherhood, but she was overwhelmed with emotion when she saw a group of nuns. She returned to the Bosnian town for a year and realised that the Lord was calling her to do something else: 'Our Lady responded to my request to become a mother. Not in the way I had imagined, though; at that time, I thought I would have one or two children. She gave me many children," she said.

However, Leone's appointment to replace environmentalist Murray was not the only blow to the old Vatican communications system yesterday. After downsizing it in August, the Pope also dismissed Father Enzo Fortunato with a **chirograph**. Prevost abolished the Pontifical Committee for World Children's Day, which had been created ad hoc for him by Francis, and ordered the termination of his position

as president. The Franciscan, who was omnipresent and pampered by the national media, had been one of the symbolic faces of Bergoglio's pontificate. He was not an ideological figure, unlike many others, but he was accused by many of elbowing his way in too much.

His definitive departure could foreshadow that of his colleague Cardinal Mauro Gambetti, archpriest of St Peter's Basilica in the Vatican and president of the Fabric of St Peter's. There have been countless complaints about the management of the basilica, including the removal of the canons' stalls at the Altar of the Chair. Changes to Vatican communications have only just begun and are set to continue until October next year, when the prefect of the dicastery, Paolo Ruffini, will say goodbye, having reached the age of 70 as required by the Curia's regulations for the termination of lay leaders. When Bergoglio appointed Ruffini in 2018, he reportedly confided in him with a smile: 'I chose you because they told me you are left-wing'. Whether or not this is true, it is clear that Leo XIV will adopt different criteria when choosing his successor.