

Leo XIV

The 'Prevost remedy' for the Curia begins with Papal House

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Is Leo XIV getting into the swing of things? The recent appointment of Father Edward Daniang Daleng as vice-regent of the Prefecture of the Papal Household suggests that a new phase of the pontificate is approaching, in which the Pope's influence will become

more apparent. The appointment of an Augustinian to the 'master' body of the papal agenda makes it clear that Prevost intends to start shaping the Curia with people in whom he has absolute confidence.

Shortly after the election, some friends suggested to their former superior that he involve some brethren in the management of public and private audiences.

However, Leo XIV took his time, relying heavily on the experience of Monsignor Leonardo Sapienza in these six months. Having spent decades in that office, first assisting Monsignor Paolo de Nicolò as an official and then succeeding him as regent, the learned religious of the Rogationist order gave the new Pope confidence by introducing him to the most complicated 'job' in the world.

The appointment of the Nigerian Augustinian as vice-regent now paves the way for a controlled succession in a strategically important office. By choosing him, Leo XIV brings a piece of Africa back to the heart of the Curia after years of Bergoglian austerity. However, Father Eddy — as he is known to his friends — is no novice, and now knows more about Rome than his native Nigeria, despite having travelled extensively during his time as Assistant General for Africa in the Order. His appointment also rectifies the slight disappointment that circulated when Prevost did not choose an Augustinian as his second secretary. Pope Leo knows him well and trusts him; he wanted him as his assistant at the beginning of his second term as Prior General of the Order.

However, the Prefecture of the Papal Household pales in comparison to the seismic shifts announced in the Secretariat of State. The earthquake began with the removal of the ultra-Bergoglian Roberto Campisi, the first councillor to leave the Apostolic Palace without episcopal ordination. While we wait to see if Pietro Parolin's tenure will extend beyond the 'donec aliter provideatur' period, it seems that Monsignor Edgar Peña Parra's time in Giovanni Battista Montini's former office is coming to an end.

Vatican rumours agree that the Venezuelan substitute will leave soon. Peña Parra's had been one of Francis's most controversial appointments, but over time, the prelate skilfully managed to extricate himself from the Bergoglian magic circle, ending up on the list of 'bad guys' at Santa Marta for a time. Those who predicted his immediate departure following the election of Prevost were disappointed, but things now seem to have changed to the extent that the dismissal of a cardinal for Becciu's successor would no longer be taken for granted.

According to leaks from the Sacred Palaces, his next destination after the Third Lodge could be a nunciature. Pope Leo XIV knows that trust in the substitute is

running out, and more than a few people are beginning to grumble about the new Pope's alleged slowness in making decisions.

The convocation of the extraordinary consistory demonstrates Leo's commitment to honouring his promises to the cardinals in the new Synod Hall during the first post-election meeting. It is likely that the Pope's main collaborators, having rediscovered their role after the Bergoglian period, will encourage Leo to speed up the decision-making processes necessary for restoring normality to the governance of the Church.