

Praedicate Evangelium - Apostolic Constitution on the Reform of the Roman Curia

Rev. Fr. Anthony J

Introduction

The long-awaited Apostolic Constitution envisaging the reformation of the Roman Curia titled *Praedicate Evangelium* PE (Preach the Gospel) was promulgated on 19 March 2022, the 9th anniversary of the pontificate of Pope Francis. It has abrogated and replaced the previous document *Pastor Bonus*, promulgated by Pope St. John Paul II, on 28 June 1988 and was in force for the past 35 years. The new apostolic constitution has come into force on the Solemnity of Pentecost, 5 June 2022. The incipit of the document *Praedicate Evangelium* accentuates the nature, focus and the impetus of the function of the Roman Curia. The press conference which presented the constitution stated: “the new apostolic constitution proposes to better harmonize the current exercise of the Curia’s service with the path of evangelization that the Church, especially in this season, is living.” The heart of the reform of the Roman Curia is the conversion of the Church being a missionary in its very existence and nature. Pope Francis in his address to the Roman Curia on 21 December 2019 reinstated that the first and most important task of the Church is the evangelization and the reform of structures consists in ensuring that they all become more mission-oriented.¹ The importance of evangelization and the missionary identity of the Church was strongly scripted in the *Evangelium Gaudium*, the first apostolic exhortation of Pope Francis.² From the texts of the EG, one could decipher the impetus of his pontificate and his vision for the Catholic Church. PE has thrown clarity on the competency of the Dicasteries, the principle of subsidiarity, decentralization, accountability and transparency in the administrative and financial structures of the Roman Curia. The recent reform of the Roman Curia drives every member of the Church to realize that the Roman Pontiff envisages and suggests a future prospectus of reform of the local Churches at every diocesan and parish administration.

1. Down the Memory Lane - Roman Curia

Roman Law had originally used the term ‘Curia’. The founder of the eternal city, Romulus had divided the three tribes into ten curiae. It was later formed as the seat of legislative assembly - senate. The Church had incorporated the system that existed in the Roman empire and formulated a close knitted group that assisted the Roman Pontiff or the Diocesan Bishop. The history of the existence of a Curia date back to the first centuries. Up to ten centuries there were no dicasteries or congregations of the Roman Curia rather there were individual collaborators, college of members who assisted the Supreme Pontiff. At times, their functions had been entrusted to others as these groups were not permanently established. It functioned as a family

¹ FRANCIS, Address to the Roman Curia, in *L’Osservatore Romano*, 22 December 2019, p.4.

² FRANCIS, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelium Gaudium*, (24 November 2013), in *AAS* 105 (2013), 1019-1137.

group, supporting the Supreme Pastor of the Church. Hence it had no definitive institutional structures.³

Having felt the need of an established organizational structure of the Roman Curia, Pope Gregory VII redefined the role of the Roman Pontiff and the Roman Curia in the pastoral administration of the universal Church. The evolution of the Roma Curia had become something parallel to the evolution of the function of College of Cardinals. During the Pontificate of Urban II, the consistory of cardinals had met at least thrice a week to assist the Roman Pontiff to decide on some grave matters and such decisions were scripted and decreed as the papal decretals. The regular meeting of the Consistory of the cardinals in Rome had set the precedence of the organizational structure of the present Roman Curia. In the period the Avignon crisis, the Supreme Pontiff was assisted by a group of members - not the Roma Curia but the members who were in close proximity to the Roman Pontiff. To the dismay of its function, the nepotism had crept into the organization of Papal Curia and favoritism and abuse of power had maligned its credibility. In the 15th Century, after the end of Oriental schism, the *potestas* of the college of cardinals and the competence of the consistory had gradually diminished and they were restricted to a consultative body.

In the middle of 15th Century, the congregation of cardinals was founded as a stable commission. Pope Paul III, in 1542 had established Sant'Ufficio- *Santa Romana Inquisizione*, the 'precursor' of the Dicastery for Doctrine of Faith. It was the *ufficio* that processed/judged the heresies and ordered the inquisition. Paul IV and Sixtus V had reinforced its power and extended the competence of Sant'ufficio.⁴ The Ecumenical Council of Trent had reformed the teachings of the Catholicism and suggested the reorganization of the Roman Curia. With the promulgation of the Apostolic Constitution, *Immensa aeterni*, 22 January 1588, Sixtus V restructured the Roma Curia into a juridical unit of 15 Congregations and subsequently, a group of 5 cardinals were assigned to each Congregation who had decided the ordinary matters collegially and more important and grave matters were referred to the Roman Pontiff.⁵ However, there was no clear distinction between administrative and judicial competences. Among 15 Congregations, 10 had the competence over spiritual matters and the rest had over the temporal goods of the Holy See. There were three Tribunals: The Apostolic Penitentiary, the Apostolic Signatura and the Roman Rota. Up to 1870, no major changes had surfaced in the Roman Curia. In late 1870, the loss of competence/power over the temporal goods of the Holy See, had restricted the competence of the Roman Curia to the ecclesiastical concerns. The Apostolic Constitution *Sapienti consilio*⁶ (29 June 1908), promulgated by Pius X had enunciated the distinction of competence of the congregations and the tribunals on administrative and judiciary causes. It had explicitly stated that the competence of the congregations was restricted to purely administrative causes. The judicial causes were reserved to the Roman Rota and the matters of internal forum were assigned to the *Apostolic Segnatura*

³ Cf. K. MARTINS, "The Reform of the Roman Curia at the Service of the New Evangelization," in *The Jurist* 75 (2015), 202.

⁴ G. GHIRLANDA, Cost. Ap. "Praedicate Evangelium" in *Periodica* 111 (2022), p. 358.

⁵ Cf. N. TANNER, "La riforma della curia romana nella storia," in *Concilium* 49/5 (2013), 32.

⁶ PIUS X, Apostolic Constitution *Sapienti consilio*, (29 June 1908) in *ASS* 41(1908), 425-490.

and *Apostolic Penitentiaria*. Besides the Ap. Con. *Sapienti consilio*, which stipulated the function of the Congregations, there were other general and particular norms to specify the competence, role play and work- description of each congregation.

With the intention of the decentralization envisioned for pastoral motives and due implementation of the teaching of second Vatican council on doctrine of episcopate and episcopal collegiality, Paul VI, issued new Ap. Constitution *Regimini Ecclesiae universae*⁷ (REU) on 15 August 1967. It has specified that under the President of the Secretariat of State, there were two offices: Secretariate of State and the Public Affairs of the Church, nine congregations, three secretariates and one Pontifical Councils. The *Sectio altera* of Apostolic Segnatura was created to deal on the recourses against the singular administrative decrees issued by the congregations of the Roman Curia. The competence to deal the cases on nullity of marriage was given to Roman Rota. Besides these novelties introduced in REU, the curia was internationalized by assigning to the group of cardinals, seven other diocesan bishops as the members of each dicastery. The term of office of the cardinals, bishops, consultors was defined to five years (*quinquennio*) and at the judicial discretion of Roman Pontiff it could be extended. For the first time, the laity were inducted into the Roman Curia as consultors.

On 28 June 1988, John Paul II had promulgated Ap. Con. *Pastor Bonus*⁸ integrating the public affairs of the Church to the Secretariat of State and two sections became part of it. 9 Congregations, 12 Pontifical Councils, 3 Tribunals, 2 Institutes and 3 offices became part of the Roman Curia. PB had redefined the competence of the various dicasteries. The title/incipit of the document vocalized, Jesus as the Supreme Pastor from whom other pastors of the Church receive their mandate of service for pastoral mission.⁹ The Roman Curia is an instrument of service, assisting the Roman Pontiff through the competence received from him and communicate his decisions to the local church. Therefore, with pastoral emphasis in its activities, the Roman Curia began operating for the ecclesial service. Therefore, it should not be seen as bureaucratic offices.

2. Impetus of the Style of Pontificate of Pope Francis and Reformation of the Curia

According the style of governance of each Roman Pontiff, his discernment and the vision for the Church, the Roman curia, down the centuries, was being restructured. Prior to the Promulgation of Ap. Constitution *Praedicate Evangelium*, Pope Francis had brought out significant changes in the Roman Curia by establishing new dicasteries and councils and merging some of the offices. In the past nine years of his Pontificate, the changes in the administration and structure of the Roman Curia reflected his accent on transparency, accountability in the administration of Holy See and induction of more idoneous laity in to the Roman Curia. In 2014, Francis had established the Council for the Economy to oversee the management of financial transactions in the activities of the Roman Curia. He has also

⁷ Paul VI, Apostolic Constitution, *Regimini Ecclesiae universae* (15 August 1967), in *AAS* 59 (1967), pp. 885-928.

⁸ John Paul II, Apostolic Constitution, *Pastor Bonus* (28 June 1988) in *AAS* 80 (1988), 841-930.

⁹ G. GHIRLANDA, Cost. Ap. "Praedicate Evangelium" in *Periodica* 11 (2022), p. 358.

established the Secretariat for the Economy to supervise and coordinate economic dealings of Vatican State. On 27 June 2015, he had established a dicastery for Communication¹⁰ with 9 different entities, and entrusted it to a laity as the prefect of the dicastery.¹¹ The council of Laity and the Council of Family were merged into the Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life on 15 August 2016.¹² The Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development¹³ was instituted to carry on the works of Justice, peace, special care for migrants, health care and Charitable activities of Caritas Internationalis. The following pontifical councils were merged into this new dicastery: Pontifical Council for the Health Care Workers, Pontifical for Cor Unum, Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, Pontifical Council *Cor Unum*. Pope Francis, with the motu proprio *Fidem servare*, established two distinct sections in the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith: the doctrinal and disciplinary competencies.¹⁴ The aforementioned changes introduced during the pontificate of Pope Francis have become integral part of the new apostolic constitution *Praedicate Evangelium*.

3. Enroute of the New Apostolic Constitution PE

Prior to the consistory in 2013- the election of Pope Francis, the general meeting of the cardinals had given the directive to reform the Roman Curia. On assuming the head of the Universal Catholic Church, Pope Francis on 28 September 2013 had instituted the council of cardinals (popularly known as C.9 group of cardinals) to assist him in the governance of the Church and entrusted to them the revision of the Apostolic Constitution *Pastor Bonus*.

The Council of Cardinals had finished the first draft of the new constitution in 2018. The text was sent to the President of National Episcopal Conferences, Congregations of the Roman Curia, Synod of the Eastern Churches, Conferences of Major Superiors and some of the Pontifical Universities in 2019. The seven Cardinals had met in February 2020 for re-reading the document. The text was handed over to Pope Francis for his personal evaluation and study. On 16 September 2020, the revised text was given to the dicastery for the Doctrine of Faith and the Pontifical Council for Legislative Texts for their observations.¹⁵ Meanwhile, in January 2021, Pope Francis had introduced the reform of the Vatican finances by creation of the Council for the Economy, the Secretariat for the Economy and the Office of the Revisor General.

The Holy Father, time and again has expressed his intention and the need for the reformation of PB. The following themes have been recurrent in his addresses to the members of the Roman Curia and the meeting of the College of Cardinals. i) Simplification of the organization of the Roman Curia; ii) Decentralization of the offices at Vatican; iii) Emphasis on the Pastoral nature

¹⁰ Pope Francis with the Motu Proprio *L'attuale contesto comunicativo* (27 June 2015) established the Dicastery for Communication. The nine entities under this dicastery are: 1) Pontifical Council for Social Communications 2) Vatican Television Centre, 3) Vatican Publishing House, 4) *L'Osservatore Romano*, 5) Vatican Radio, 6) Holy See Press Office, 7) Photographic Service, 8) Vatican Internet Service and 9) Vatican Printing Press.

¹¹ Mr. Paolo Ruffini is the present Prefect of the Dicastery for Communication.

¹² FRANCIS, Motu Proprio, *Sedula mater* (15 August 2016), in AAS 108 (2016), 963-967.

¹³ FRANCIS, Motu Proprio, *Humanam progressionem* (17 August 2016), in AAS 108 (2016), 968-972.

¹⁴ FRANCIS, Motu Proprio, *Fidem servare*, (11 February 2022) in [www. Vatican. va](http://www.vatican.va).

¹⁵ G. GHIRLANDA, Cost. Ap. "Praedicate Evangelium" in *Periodica* 11 (2022), p. 363.

of the Church and Service to the Particular Local Churches and iv) Discouragement of the careerism.

As the amplification of his vision of a Church that is missionary, transparent, accountable and decentralized, the new Ap. Constitution has effectively reflected the *mens legislatoris*. The supreme Legislator of the Church has been tirelessly working on the reformation of the Church and more particularly in the administration of the Holy See and its assets. The maxim of the angelic saint Augustine, *Ecclesia semper reformanda est* is proven once again with the promulgation of PE – the reform of the Roman Curia and all the councils, offices part of it or associated with it.

4. The Structure of the Ap. Constitution PE

After the Preamble of the document (12 numbers), the second part consists of the principles and the criteria for the service of the Roman Curia (12 numbers). The final part of the constitution- normative part is composed of 250 articles.

4.1 The Preamble

The Preamble lucidly sets out the perspective into which the reform is inserted in the PE. There is change of the epoch and *milieu* in which the Church functions today. We are no more in the Epoch of Christianity and now the Church is in need of Missionary Conversion to know the mystery of the communion that the Synodal Church learns to listen to each other. It speaks of the Apostolic Church characterized by hierarchical communion of all Bishops, the successors of apostles, with Pope the successor of Peter and the college of Bishops as well as mutual relationships that meets among the Universal Church and the Particular Churches.

There are two services rendered by the Roman Curia - 1. Direct and Immediate Service to Pope as he is the first pastor of the universal Church and 2. Indirect Service to Bishops and the Episcopal Conferences and the Oriental Churches.

4.2 The Guiding Principles of the Apostolic Constitution

The guiding 11 principles and criteria¹⁶ for the service of the Roman Curia are enumerated in the second section of PE. The principle for the reduction of dicasteries is to avoid the overlap of competencies and to ensure effective work of the curial departments. The 11 principles are:

1. Service to the Pope's Mission
2. Co-responsibility in the *communio*
3. Service to the mission of the Bishops
4. Support for the particular Churches and their Episcopal Conferences and Eastern Hierarchical Structures
5. The vicarious nature of the Roman Curia

¹⁶ FRANCIS, Apostolic Constitution, "Praedicate Evangelium," (19 March 2022), in www.vatican.va.

6. Spirituality
7. Personal Integrity and professionalism
8. Collaboration between the Dicasteries
9. Interdicasterial and Intradicasterial Meetings
10. Expression of Catholicity
11. Reduction of Dicasteries.

4.3 General Norms

The general norms of PE (artt. 1-43) forms the third section of the new Apostolic Constitution. Nine themes are highlighted in this section.

- 1) The notion of the Roman Curia (art. 1)
- 2) Pastoral Nature of the Roman Curia (artt. 2-6)
- 3) Operating Principles of the Roman Curia (artt. 7-11)
- 4) The Structure of the Roman Curia (artt. 12-19)
- 5) Competencies and Procedures of Curial Institutions (artt. 20-33)
- 6) Meeting of Heads of Curial Institutions (artt. 34-35)
- 7) Roman Curia at the Service of the Particular Churches (artt. 36-37)
- 8) *Ad limina Apostolorum* Visits (artt. 38-42)
- 9) Regulations (art. 43).

4.4 Secretariat of State¹⁷

Addition to the modification introduced by Pastor Bonus, Pope Francis in November 2017, besides the two sections of the Secretariat of State, i) The section for General Affairs ii) The section for Relations with States, third section for Diplomatic Staff of the Holy See is instituted under the Secretariat of State (PE artt. 44-52) to express his closeness to the diplomatic officials of the Holy See.

4.5 Dicasteries

Prior to the promulgation of PE there were 21 Dicasteries which are now reduced into 16 Dicasteries (PE artt. 53-188). Pope Francis aims to reduce the Dicasteries to end the overlapping of competencies and effectiveness of the work of Roman Curia. The 16 Dicasteries are as follows:

- 1) Dicastery for Evangelization (artt. 53-68)
- 2) Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith (artt. 69-78)
- 3) Dicastery for the Service of Charity (artt. 79-81)
- 4) Dicastery for the Eastern Churches (artt. 82-87)
- 5) Dicastery for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments (artt. 88-97)
- 6) Dicastery for the Causes of Saints (artt. 98-102)

¹⁷ PE, artt. 44-52.

- 7) Dicastery for Bishops (artt. 103-112)
- 8) Dicastery for the Clergy (artt. 113-120)
- 9) Dicastery for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life (artt. 121-127)
- 10) Dicastery for the Laity, Family, and Life (artt. 128-141)
- 11) Dicastery for Promoting Christian Unity (artt. 142-146)
- 12) Dicastery for Interreligious Dialogue (artt. 147-152)
- 13) Dicastery for Culture and Education (artt. 153-162)
- 14) Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development (artt. 163-174)
- 15) Dicastery for Legislative Texts (artt. 175-182)
- 16) Dicastery for Communication (artt. 183-188).

4.6 Organismi di Giustizia (Organizations /Institutions of Justice)

After enumerating the role of each dicastery, the sixth part of PE enumerates the three tribunals of the Church-the institutions of justice. (PE artt. 189-204).

- 1) Apostolic Penitentiary (artt. 190-193)
- 2) The Supreme Tribunal of the Apostolic Signatura (artt. 194-199)
- 3) The Tribunal of the Roman Rota (artt. 200-204).

4.7 Organismi Economici (Institutions of Finance)

Six offices are placed in under *organismi economici*. The seventh section of PE enumerates them. (PE artt. 205-227). PE has added three more institutions. The financial affairs and investment made on behalf of Holy See and the administration of Patrimony of Holy see are part of this organism of economy. The *Instituto per le Opere di Religione* will function as operational team for the committee for Investments.¹⁸

- 1) Council for the Economy (artt. 205-211)
- 2) Secretariat for the Economy (artt. 212-218)
- 3) Administration of the Patrimony of the Apostolic See (artt. 219-221)
- 4) Office of the Auditor General (artt. 222-224)
- 5) Commission for Confidential Matters (artt. 225-226)
- 6) Committee for Investments (art. 227).

4.8 Uffici (Offices)

The work of three offices of the Roman Curia is enumerated in the eighth part of PE (artt. 228-237).

- 1) Prefecture of the Papal Household (artt. 228-230)

¹⁸ PE, artt. 205-227

- 2) Office for the Liturgical Celebrations of the Supreme Pontiff (artt. 231-234)
- 3) Camerlengo of the Holy Roman Church (artt. 235-237).

4.9 Avvocati (Register of Advocates)

Two sections of lawyers are mentioned in the ninth section of PE (artt. 238-240)

- 1) Register of advocates in the Roman Curia
- 2) Corps of advocates of the Holy See¹⁹

4.10 Institutions Associated with the Holy See

Some of the institutions which are not part of the Roman Curia, having their own juridical personality, but associated with it are mentioned in PE. (artt. 241-249). 1) The Vatican Apostolic Archive; 2) The Vatican Apostolic Library; 3) The Fabric of St Peter which deals with matters concerning the Papal Basilica of St. Peter; 4) The Pontifical Commission for Sacred Archaeology; 5) The Pontifical Academy of Sciences; 6) The Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences and the Pontifical Academy for Life and 7) The Agency for the Evaluation and Promotion of the Quality in Ecclesiastical Universities and Faculties.²⁰ All the aforesaid institutions are governed by their own laws in consonance with PE.

4.11 Transitional Norm

The final article of PE (art. 250 §§ 1-3) has enshrined that the Provisions of the norms of the Apostolic Constitution PE apply to all: the Secretariat of State, dicasteries, institutions, offices, institutions associated with the Holy See. The statutes and proper laws of the Dicasteries and offices are permissible to observe them as long as they are not contradictory to the Ap. Cons. PE. The general regulations of the Roman Curia, the *ordo servandus* and *modus procedendi* of curia institutions and offices are permitted to follow until the approval of the new *Ordo servandus* and statutes.²¹

5. Newness of Praedicate Evangelium

Pastor Bonus the former Apostolic Constitution has enunciated the organization of the Roman Curia into Secretariat of State, Secretariat of Economy, nine congregations, three dicasteries, three tribunals, five Pontifical Councils and three offices. *Praedicate Evangelium* has merged some of the councils with the dicasteries or raised some of the departments into new independent dicasteries. PE does not use the terminology Congregations rather dicasteries which means departments. The nomenclature Dicasteries has become standard term to name the offices of the Roman Curia. The word ‘Dicastery’ comes from the Greek word *dikaiasune* which means justice/righteousness²². The change of the term also has implication that those

¹⁹ PE, artt. 238-240.

²⁰ PE, artt. 241-249.

²¹ PE, art. 250.

²² N. ABEYASINGHA, “Praedicate Evangelium: Pope Francis’ Reform of Curia,” in *Vidyajyothi Journal of Theological Reflection*, 86/8 (2022), p. 573.

serve in the Roman Curia will fulfill their role in the spirit of justice and righteousness in execution of their office in relationship with the people.

The Constitution PE states that all the dicasteries and bodies are all juridically equal to each other. The Roman Curia is composed of the Secretariat of the State, 16 Dicasteries, tribunals and offices. With the promulgation of PE there is reduction of departments of the Vatican Curia. The necessity to reduce the number of departments is to make them more effective and as the constitution states “whose purpose was very similar or complementary and rationalize their functions with the aim of avoiding overlapping of competencies.”²³ To state a few examples: The Pontifical Council for Promoting the New Evangelization and the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples are merged in to the Dicastery for Evangelization (artt.53-68). This dicastery will be headed by the Roman Pontiff and the day today affairs of the dicastery will be supervised by Pro-prefects. The dicastery for Evangelization tops all the Dicasteries of Roman Curia and pushes, the Dicastery for the Doctrine of Faith to the second place which was earlier ‘La Suprema’ of all the Dicasteries and Departments. The change in the placement of list of dicasteries indicates the centrality in the new structure of the Roman Curia.

Congregation for Catholic Education and the Pontifical Council for Culture are merged together. The activities of the some of the pontifical academies such as such as the Pontifical Academy of Archeology and the Pontifical Academy of Theology will be coordinated by the Dicastery for Culture and Education. It will work for the development of human values in people within the horizon of Christian anthropology, contributing to the full realization of Christian discipleship.

The Dicastery for Evangelization has two sections: one for Fundamental questions of Evangelization in the World and another for the First Evangelization and the new particular Churches in the mission territories of its competence which includes the work of the Pontifical Mission Societies.

The Dicastery for Doctrine of Faith has two sections- disciplinary and doctrinal (artt. 69-78). The crime of sexual abuse of minors is brought under the dicastery for Doctrine of Faith. Cardinal Sean O’ Malley has praised the new change as a “significant move forward in safeguarding the rights of the minors in the entire Church.”

The Office of Papal Charities- administered by the papal almoner is upgraded as the dicastery for the Service of Charity and listed third among the dicasteries. It assists the most vulnerable, marginalized and those in the fringes of the society. It acts to be the direct charitable outreach aid of the Pope to those in need and victims of war or natural calamities. Here one could recall the triple expressions of the Church pointed out by Pope Benedict XVI: Proclamation

²³ PE, Principles and criteria for the service of the Roman Curia, n. 11.

(*Kerygma*), Worship (*Leitourgia*) and Charity or service (*Diakonia*). The significance of charity or service has significant role in present reformation of the Curia.²⁴

6. Power of Governance and the heads of the Dicasteries

According to the new constitution any member of the faithful can lead the Roman curia, i.e dicasteries or other bodies “given their particular competence, power of governance and function.” The article n.5 states: “Every curial institution carries out its own mission by virtue of the power of received from the Roman Pontiff in whose name it acts with vicarious power in the exercise of his *primatial munus*. For this reason, any member of the faithful may preside over a dicastery or body, given their particular competence, power of governance and function.” PE art. 5 reaffirms the vicarious power mentioned in Pastor Bonus art. 8. The vicarious power received from the Roman Pontiff is to empower the competence of the Roman Curia and act with authority regarding the matter involved. It is clear from the new constitution that it is not through the hierarchical rank or sacred order but because of the power received from the Roman Pontiff and exercise in his name they receive the authority of power of governance. Therefore, the vicarious power to carry out an office is the same if it is received by a Bishop, Priest, a consecrated man or woman or layman or woman. PE art. 15 stated that addition to cardinals, bishops, presbyters and deacons can also be “some members of institutes of consecrated life and societies of apostolic life and some lay faithful. This is an innovation in PE. The preceding constitution Pastor Bonus art. 7 articulated. “but without prejudice to the fact that the affairs which require the exercise of the power of governance must be reserved to those who are in holy orders.”²⁵

Can. 129 enunciates: § 1 Those who are in sacred orders are, in accordance with the provisions of law, capable of the power governance, which in fact belongs to the Church by divine institution. This power is also called the power of jurisdiction.

§ 2 Lay members of Christ’s faithful can cooperate in the exercise of this same power in accordance with the law.

The new climate in the Roman Curia will induct more laity and women and assign leading positions to them. However, it is not very clear which dicasteries will be headed by the laity in the future. If the power of governance is conferred to those only in the power of orders can the laity participate in it? The question of power of governance was not settled in the discussion of Vatican Council and in the revision of the 1917 Code. The request to suppress the cann 129§ 2 and 1421 § 2 was rejected by the revision commission. The canons remained in 1983 Code. The recent change introduced in the tribunal procedures by MP MIDI, can 1673 § 3 has restated that the laity can exercise the judicial power only in collegiality and not individually. The president of the college of judges should be a cleric. *Praedicate Evangelium* has somehow settled the question of laity exercising the power of governance. The laity through the particular competence and the offices they hold in the Roman Curia can exercise the power of governance and it has subtly affirmed that power of governance exercised in the Catholic Church does not

²⁴ N. ABEYASINGHA, “Praedicate Evangelium: Pope Francis’ Reform of Curia,” p. 574.

²⁵ PB, art. 7

necessarily flow from the power of order but the canonical mission received through the mandate of the Pope.

7. Careerism of the Clergy in Vatican Offices

PE has clearly stipulated tenure of five years to the Clergy serve in the Vatican Offices. It is a strong signal communicated by Pope Francis to end the careerism of clergy in the Vatican offices. The indication of maximum of five-year term (once renewable) to the Clergy in Vatican curia will ascertain that they return to the dioceses of their incardination after the completion of their tenure. The excessive domination of a group of clergies in the Roman Curia will soon draw its end.

Conclusion

The reformation of Roman Curia indicated by Pope Francis underlines the rationale of conversion, transparency, collaboration and accountability. Any change has its initial challenges and resistance. We are yet to harvest the fruit of its implementation to be a synodal Church which listens and accompanies one another to end clericalism and the monopoly of authorities. With the clarity and collaboration among inter-dicasteries and intra-dicasteries, the decentralized service with pastoral and missionary emphasis, it is our ardent hope that PE will bear the desired fruits and the Evangelization/mission will be the *prima munera* and the primary existence of the Church.