

Cardinal Farrell to lead commission determining confidential contracts

VATICAN CITY (CNS) – Continuing his efforts to ensure financial transparency and accountability, Pope Francis named Cardinal Kevin J. Farrell, prefect of the Dicastery for Laity, the Family and Life to lead a commission that determines which economic activities remain confidential.

The pope also named Archbishop Filippo Iannone, president of the Pontifical Council for Legislative Texts, as secretary of the newly formed “Commission for Reserved Matters,” the Vatican announced Oct. 5.

The pope named several members to the committee, including Bishop Fernando Vergez Alzaga, secretary general of Vatican City State; Bishop Nunzio Galantino, president of the Administration of the Patrimony of the Holy See, which handles the Vatican’s investment portfolio and real estate holdings; and Jesuit Father Juan Antonio Guerrero Alves, prefect of the Secretariat for the Economy.

The commission was a part of the new transparency laws enacted by the pope in June covering contracts for the purchase of goods, property and services for both the Roman Curia and Vatican City State offices, and was part of further centralizing control over the Vatican’s finances.

The goal of the new laws was also to save money by establishing central purchasing offices at the Governorate for Vatican City State and at the administration of the patrimony of the Holy See for offices of the Roman Curia.

According to Vatican News, the commission would oversee and judge on a case-by-case basis which economic activities as

well as public contracts should remain confidential.

The committee would specifically review contracts that “fulfill international obligations” or that “are financed in whole or in part by an international organization or an international financial institution.”

It would also review contracts that “deal with matters covered by the obligation of secrecy set forth” in “La Cura Vigilantissima” (“Vigilant Care”), a document issued “motu proprio,” or on his own authority, by St. John Paul II forbidding the disclosure or consultation of certain private documents.

“The acts of the conclaves, the examination of the documents of the Supreme Pontiffs and cardinals, episcopal trials, internal forum documents, positions relating to the personnel of the Holy See and Vatican City State and matrimonial cases, as well as the documents indicated as such by the Secretariat of State, are to be considered confidential and secret,” the 2005 document states.

Before the announcement, Pope Francis met Oct. 5 with members of “La Cassa Depositi e Prestiti,” a major Italian investment bank, and spoke about ethical business management that reflects “fair and transparent conduct” and “does not give in to corruption.

“In the exercise of one’s own responsibilities it is necessary to know how to distinguish good from bad,” the pope said. “Indeed, even in the field of economics and finance, good intentions, transparency and the search for good results are compatible and must never be separated.”

Christian thought, he added, “is not opposed in principle to the prospect of profit, but rather is opposed to profit at any cost, to profit that forgets man, makes him a slave, reduces him to a ‘thing’ among others, a variable in a process that he cannot in any way control or which he cannot in any way

oppose.”