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Pope Francis visits children of Vatican employees attending a summer camp at the Vatican on July 18, 2024. Also in the photo, on the left, are Cardinal Fernando Vérgez Alzaga, president of the commission governing Vatican City State, and Sr. Raffaella Petrini, then-secretary-general of the commission and a member of the Franciscan Sisters of the Eucharist. (CNS/Vatican Media)

by Catholic News Service

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Vatican City — February 27, 2025

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The office governing Vatican City State was set to have a new president March 1 and, while in the hospital, Pope Francis changed the office's statutes to give the new president two top-level assistants.

As he had announced on an Italian television program in January, Francis appointed Franciscan Sister of the Eucharist Raffaella Petrini as president of the Vatican City State government beginning March 1.

She had been secretary-general of the office since late 2021 and will be the first woman to lead the office.

The Vatican press office announced Feb. 25 that Francis had slightly moderated the "Fundamental Law of Vatican City State" to appoint two secretaries-general to assist Petrini rather than just one.

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The two are: Archbishop Emilio Nappa, who was adjunct secretary of the Dicastery for Evangelization and is president of the Pontifical Mission Societies; and Giuseppe Puglisi-Alibrandi, a lawyer who had served as vice secretary-general of the office since 2021.

Working from Rome's Gemelli hospital, where he has been receiving treatment for double pneumonia since Feb. 14, Francis ordered that Petrini has "the power to organize and confer on" her secretaries-general the tasks she believes each should handle.

The Vatican City State governing office is responsible for a vast array of essential services, including: the Vatican police and fire departments; upkeep of the Vatican gardens; trash collection; the Vatican health service and pharmacy; the post office; the Vatican museums; and all the Vatican infrastructure, including internet, telephones, electricity and plumbing.