# Cardinal Víctor Manuel Fernández and Archbishop Georg Gänswein: Vatican Leadership Appointments Under Pope Francis



### Cardinal Víctor Manuel Fernández Appointed to Top Vatican Role

VATICAN CITY — Cardinal Víctor Manuel Fernández, a liberal Argentine archbishop, has been appointed by Pope Francis to lead the Dicastery of the Doctrine of the Faith. His role is pivotal in translating the pope’s reforms into guidelines for the Roman Catholic Church’s 1.4 billion members. Fernández’s appointment follows historic internal dissent within the church and marks the end of conservative leadership in this Vatican department.

Initially, Fernández declined the role, citing fears that his appointment could exacerbate opposition to Pope Francis. However, he accepted the position after the pope’s second request in June, made from a hospital bed post-surgery. Fernández moved to Vatican City, was named a cardinal, and assumed his duties.

Massimo Faggioli, a theologian at Villanova University, highlighted the significance of Fernández’s appointment, describing it as the most consequential of Francis’s pontificate. Fernández has implemented several notable changes, including authorizing blessings for same-sex relationships and allowing baptisms of transgender individuals. He has also released rulings to prevent the declaration of unexplained phenomena as supernatural events.

Fernández’s liberal stance has drawn ire from church conservatives, who view him as a major opponent. His appointment is also seen as freeing Pope Francis to push his agenda post the death of former Pope Benedict XVI. Fernández’s leadership has not only shifted the tone but also brought substantial policy changes despite facing significant resistance, including threats to his safety.

### Archbishop Georg Gänswein Named Papal Nuncio to Baltic States

The Vatican has appointed Archbishop Georg Gänswein, the former secretary of the late Pope Benedict XVI, as its diplomatic representative to Lithuania, Estonia, and Latvia. This follows his removal from Vatican duties last year after falling out with Pope Francis. Gänswein, 67, had previously led services at Freiburg Cathedral after being sent back to his native Germany without a permanent role.

Gänswein's departure from the Vatican followed the release of his memoir, "Nothing But the Truth: My Life Beside Pope Benedict XVI," which was critical of Pope Francis and revealed internal Vatican conflicts. His new role as papal nuncio comes amid ongoing speculation about his future within the church.

Pope Francis’s decision underscores the shifting dynamics within the Vatican, reflecting the evolving leadership and direction of the Roman Catholic Church.