

MEDIA RELEASE

Pope Francis appoints O'Malley in renewed push to make bishops accountable for clerical sexual abuse failings



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Pope Francis has appointed Boston's Cardinal Sean O'Malley, widely seen as a leading reformer in the Catholic hierarchy, as a member of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, the powerful Vatican department that deals with clerical sexual abuse cases.

The appointment is being seen by many as a further move by the Pope to ensure bishops are held accountable for their failures to protect minors from clerical sexual abusers.

Francis Sullivan, CEO of the Catholic Church's Truth Justice and Healing Council, welcomed the news saying the appointment reflects the influential role Cardinal O'Malley is playing in addressing the child sexual abuse crisis in the Church.

He is certainly among the people in the Catholic world committed to the protection of minors and vulnerable people from sexual abuse,' Mr Sullivan said.

'And he has, for many years, been an outspoken campaigner for bishops to be more accountable particularly in the area of child protection.

'Having him on one of the Vatican's most influential and powerful departments sends a clear signal that the protection of children is very much uppermost in the Pope's mind.'

The main responsibility of Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith is defending Catholic teaching, but since 2001, it's has also played a leading role in prosecuting cases under Church law for priests charged with sexual abuse.

In June 2015 the Vatican announced the establishment of a new judicial section within the CDF to handle 'abuse of office' cases against bishops accused of failing to protect their congregations from child molesters.

Media contact: Michael Salmon 0417 495 018

The Truth Justice and Healing Council is coordinating the Catholic Church's response to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.