

Vatican Gets Fox Opus Dei Media Adviser

By [Global Research](#)

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The connections between the Vatican and Opus Dei have long been a topic of public interest. The prelature has steadily risen in prominence under Pope Benedict XVI and his predecessor, John Paul II. The founder of the order, Saint Josemaria Escriva de Balaguer was canonized in 2002. Commenting on Escriva's centennial birthdate when he was known as Cardinal Josef Ratzinger, Pope Benedict XVI wrote,

"I have always been impressed by Josemaría Escrivá's explanation of the name 'Opus Dei': an explanation ... gives us an idea of the founder's spiritual profile. Escrivá knew he had to found something, but he was also conscious that what he was founding was not his own work, that he himself did not invent anything and that the Lord was merely making use of him. So it was not his work, but Opus Dei (God's Work). [This] gives us to understand that he was in a permanent dialogue, a real contact with the One who created us and works for us and with us... If therefore St Josemaría speaks of the common vocation to holiness, it seems to me that he is basically drawing on his own personal experience, not of having done incredible things himself, but of having let God work. Therefore a renewal, a force for good was born in the world even if human weaknesses will always remain."

Now that a member of Opus Dei has been appointed Senior Media Advisor for the Vatican, it seems likely that the interest in this topic will be revived. Prior to his Vatican appointment, Greg Burke served as the Fox News correspondent in Rome.

Vatican Gets Fox Media Adviser

By NICOLE WINFIELD and VICTOR L. SIMPSON 06/23/12 02:45 PM ET 



VATICAN CITY — The Vatican has brought in the Fox News correspondent in Rome to help improve its communications strategy as it tries to cope with years of communications blunders and one of its most serious scandals in decades, The Associated Press learned Saturday.

Greg Burke, 52, will leave Fox to become a senior communications adviser in the Vatican's secretariat of state, the Vatican and Burke told the AP.

"I'm a bit nervous but very excited. Let's just say it's a challenge," Burke said in a phone interview.

He defined his job, which he said he had been offered twice before, as: "You're shaping the message, you're molding the message, and you're trying to make sure everyone remains on-message. And that's tough."

The Vatican spokesman, the Rev. Federico Lombardi, confirmed the move to the AP, saying Burke will help integrate communications issues within the Vatican's top administrative office, the secretariat of state, and will help handle its relations with the Holy See press office and other Vatican communications offices.

Burke, a native of St. Louis, Missouri, is a member of the conservative Opus Dei movement. Pope John Paul II's longtime spokesman, Joaquin Navarro-Valls, was also a member of Opus Dei.

The Vatican has been bedeviled by communications blunders ever since Pope Benedict XVI's 2005 election, and is currently dealing with a scandal over Vatican documents that were leaked to Italian journalists. While the scandal is serious – Benedict himself convened a special meeting of cardinals Saturday to try to cope with it – the Vatican's communications problems long predate it.

Benedict's now-infamous speech about Muslims and violence, his 2009 decision to rehabilitate a schismatic bishop who denied the Holocaust, and the Vatican's response to the 2010 explosion of the sex abuse scandal are just a few of the blunders that have tarnished Benedict's papacy.

Burke acknowledged the task ahead but said that after turning down the Vatican twice before, he went with his gut and accepted the third time around. "This is an opportunity and

challenge that I'm not going to get again," he said.

He said he didn't know what, if any, role his membership in Opus Dei played. Opus is greatly in favor in the Vatican these days, particularly as other new religious movements such as the Legion of Christ have lost credibility with their own problems. Currently, for example, the cardinal who is heading the Vatican's internal investigation into the leaks of documents is the Opus Dei prelate, Cardinal Julian Herranz.

"I'm an old-fashioned Midwestern Catholic whose mother went to Mass every day," Burke said. "Am I being hired because I'm in Opus Dei?" he asked. "It might come into play." But he noted he was also in Opus when he was hired by *Time* and *Fox*. (emphasis added)

Burke has been a Fox correspondent since he joined the conservative U.S. network in 2001. He was the *Time* magazine correspondent in Rome for a decade before that. At Fox, he led the network's coverage of the death of John Paul and election of Benedict, and has covered the papacy since then, traveling with the pope around the globe. But he has also used Rome as a base for non-Vatican reporting, including several stints in the Middle East during the last intifada, labor law protests in France and the terrorist attacks in London and Madrid.

He is a graduate of Columbia University's School of Journalism.

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