Vatican’s mystery cash transfer

[TESS LIVINGSTONE](https://www.theaustralian.com.au/author/Tess+Livingstone)

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The saga of Vatican financial corruption took an extraordinary turn last night, when Italian ­newspaper Il Messaggero quoted the former right-hand man to ­disgraced Cardinal Angelo Becciu claiming a bank transfer of 700,000 euros was made from the Vatican to a bank in Australia.

The article quotes Monsignor Alberto Perlasca as claiming the transfer was made at the same time that the child-abuse case against Cardinal George Pell was developing in Australia.

Monsignor Perlasca worked closely with Cardinal Becciu when the latter was second in charge at the Vatican’s Secretariat of State.

Monsignor Perlasca was arraigned­ in October, after a police raid on the offices of the Secretariat.

It was no secret in Rome that cardinals Pell and Becciu were at loggerheads, the article says. Il Messaggero describes their conflicts as akin to “thunderclaps’’.

The article suggests the Holy See has been defrauded of as much as €500m.

“Today is the day for the settling of accounts,’’ the article says. “There have been verbal­ declarations and secret whispers which reveal more than one suspect in the intrigue.’’

The article suggests Monsig­nor Perlasca had decided to speak out in an open letter to Pope Francis­ after the Pope demanded Cardinal­ Becciu’s resignation. Cardinal Becciu renounced his privileges as a cardinal last week.

In Il Messaggero, Monsignor Perlasca also refers to €20m being taken from the Pope’s bank ­account and secret funds of millions­ of euros funding a property­ deal in London.