George Pell meets Pope Francis at the Vatican in Rome

2 HOURS AGO OCTOBER 13, 2020

George Pell has met Pope Francis for the first time since his jail term and sex abuse convictions were overturned by the High Court.

The Vatican confirmed that [Cardinal Pell, the church’s former global financial chief](https://www.theaustralian.com.au/world/hell-to-pay-in-the-clash-of-the-cardinals-george-pell-and-giovanni-becciu/news-story/340ace2fec9aacc4e455984e01cca5c7), met on Monday with the Pope after emerging from quarantine in Italy. The meeting will be seen by Cardinal Pell’s supporters as the ultimate vindication after he was released earlier this year from prison.

The Vatican released a short video of the meeting and that this was an overt signal that both the Pope and Cardinal Pell wanted the meeting to be seen widely. In it, Pope Francis says “good to see you” after “more than a year”. This was an apparent reference to Pell’s incarceration.

Catholic media reported the meeting, which will intensify conspiracy theories that suggest Cardinal Pell may have been the victim of internal Catholic bickering over money. No evidence has been furnished to support the conspiracy theories, which have included that [Vatican money was sent to Australia to pervert the course of justice](https://www.theaustralian.com.au/world/the-times/sacked-cardinal-used-vatican-funds-to-bribe-witnesses-in-pell-trial/news-story/64a88a004f92c0b104296277462b7600).

The Catholic News Agency on Monday reported that Cardinal Pell had a private audience with the Pope.

Cardinal Pell returned to Rome in part to clean out his old apartment but also as a holiday before he is expected to travel back to Australia and continue to live in NSW, although not necessarily at his former ­residence in a seminary in ­Sydney.

Cardinal Pell is in Rome following the resignation of his nemesis, Cardinal Angelo Becciu, amid [allegations of financial corruption](https://www.theaustralian.com.au/nation/politics/follow-the-money-trail-to-investigate-vatican-plot-pells-barrister/news-story/2e2db2274c3e9b7470f91a191e4268e8).

Cardinal Pell, when elevated to run the Vatican finances, conducted a sweeping review of the way money was being spent and handled in an anti-corruption drive that infuriated many.

Cardinal Becciu had worked in the Secretariat of State where he clashed with Cardinal Pell over the reform of Vatican finances. Cardinal Pell said last month when told about Cardinal Becciu’s resignation: “The Holy ­Father was elected to clean up Vatican finances.

“He plays a long game and is to be thanked and congratulated on recent developments.”

[Cardinal Becciu has rejected reports in the Italian media that he allegedly transferred money to Australia](https://www.theaustralian.com.au/commentary/justice-demands-we-follow-vatican-money-trail-on-cardinal-pell-case/news-story/a9cb6ed82c199e10d1377d5145d52bc0) in an attempt to influence Cardinal Pell’s trial.

Italian ­newspaper Il Messaggero quoted the former right-hand man to Cardinal Becciu claiming a bank transfer of $1.1m was made from the Vatican to a bank in Australia.