



Pietro Orlandi wears a placard with a picture of his sister Emanuela during a sit-in near Saint Peter's Basilica, in Rome, Saturday, Jan. 14, 2023. The Vatican marked the 40th anniversary of the disappearance of the teenage daughter of a Vatican employee by confirming the existence of new leads “worthy of further investigation” in hopes of finally getting to the bottom of one of the Holy See’s enduring mysteries. (AP Photo/Gregorio Borgia, File)

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Exactly 40 years after the teenage daughter of a Vatican employee disappeared, the Vatican said June 22 that new leads "worthy of further investigation" had surfaced, raising hopes of finally getting to the bottom of one of the Holy See's enduring mysteries.

Emanuela Orlandi vanished June 22, 1983, after leaving her family's Vatican City apartment to go to a music lesson in Rome. Her father was a lay employee of the Holy See. Over the years, her disappearance has been linked to everything from the plot to kill St. John Paul II, a financial scandal involving the Vatican bank and Rome's criminal underworld.

The Vatican's criminal prosecutor, Alessandro Diddi, said June 22 he had recently forwarded to prosecutors in Rome all the relevant evidence he had gathered in the six months since he reopened the investigation into Orlandi's disappearance. In a statement, he vowed to keep pursuing the case.

Popular interest in the case was renewed last year with the four-part Netflix documentary "Vatican Girl," which explored the various scenarios suspected in her disappearance and also provided new testimony from a friend who said Orlandi had told her a week before she disappeared that a high-ranking Vatican cleric had made sexual advances toward her.

After the documentary aired and with the 40th anniversary of her disappearance nearing, Orlandi's family — backed by some lawmakers — pressed for an Italian parliamentary commission of inquiry. Separately, the Vatican and Rome prosecutor's offices reopened the investigation.

Rome's previous chief prosecutor who archived the case within the Italian legal system, Giuseppe Pignatone, is now the chief judge of the Vatican's criminal tribunal, where Diddi is the chief prosecutor.

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In the statement, Diddi said his office had collected "all the evidence available in the structures of the Vatican and the Holy See."

He said his office had also interrogated people who held Vatican positions 40 years ago.

"It has proceeded to examine the material, confirming some investigative leads worthy of further investigation and transmitting all the relevant documentation, in recent weeks, to the Prosecutor's Office in Rome, so that the latter may take a look at it and proceed in the direction it deems most appropriate," the statement said.

He expressed solidarity with the Orlandi family.

Pietro Orlandi, who has fought for 40 years to find the truth about his sister, is planning a sit-in protest June 25 near the Vatican. He has long charged that the Vatican has never come clean with what it knows about the case.