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## **United Kingdom: Robert Rigby, Lord Mayor of Westminster. The first Catholic to take the office**

“It is a huge honour and an enormous privilege to accept this role”. With these words, Robert Rigby, 63, a practising Catholic, took his new office as Lord Mayor of Westminster, a neighbourhood in Central London, where Parliament is located. It is an honorary position, because the Mayor of the British capital with real political power is Sadiq Khan, but the fact that such a prestigious honour has been conferred upon a devotee of the Roman Church in a Protestant country, where Catholics did not have civil rights in the past, is significant. As “Lord Mayor of Westminster”, Robert Rigby will meet heads of State and Government on behalf of Charles III and will take part in over 500 ceremonies. For the first time ever, he will have a Catholic chaplain, Father Christopher Colven, who is in the British Parliament right now. Robert Rigby studied at “Ampleforth College”, a prestigious private Catholic institute founded by the Benedictine monks, and stated that Catholicism plays an important role in his life and that he tries to live according to the values of the Church. A lover of running, the newly elected Mayor worked twenty years for “Japan Airlines”, and it was in Japan that he met his wife, Emiko. One of his intentions for his new tenure is to promote the “Daily Mile”, an initiative that encourages children and young people to walk or run for one mile, just above one and a half kilometres, every day.

Valentina Bombelli