

# Italian Cardinal Sardi dies at 84

VATICAN CITY (CNS) – Italian Cardinal Paolo Sardi, a former official in the Vatican Secretariat of State, died in Rome July 13 at the age of 84.

Pope Francis, offering his condolences, praised the cardinal's "edifying witness," intelligence and wisdom. His "tireless and careful work" at the Vatican contributed greatly to articulating and sharing the teaching of St. Paul VI, Pope John Paul, St. John Paul II and retired Pope Benedict XVI, he said.

A "good and watchful servant," he was faithful to his episcopal motto, "Esto vigilans," (Be vigilant), the pope said.

A longtime official at the Vatican Secretariat of State, he coordinated the office that edited papal texts and speeches.

Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone presided over Cardinal Sardi's funeral Mass July 15 in St. Peter's Basilica and Pope Francis presided over the final commendation and farewell.

Cardinal Sardi had served from 2004 to 2011 as vice chamberlain of the Holy Roman Church, a position that involves special duties when a pope dies. In fact, he was among those present for the ceremony verifying the death of St. John Paul in 2005.

In 2009, Pope Benedict named Cardinal Sardi the pro-patron of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta, a position that involved promoting the spiritual interests of the Knights of Malta and their relationship with the Vatican. He held that role until 2014.

Cardinal-designate Sardi was born in Ricaldone in northern Italy in 1934 and was ordained to the priesthood in 1958. After earning a licentiate in theology, he earned a degree in canon law and jurisprudence from the Catholic University of the Sacred Heart in Milan.

He taught moral theology in Turin until 1976, when he was called to the Vatican to work in the Secretariat of State. In 1996, St. John Paul named him an archbishop and an apostolic nuncio with special responsibilities in the Vatican Secretariat of State. St. John Paul personally ordained him a bishop in 1997 while Pope Benedict elevated him to the college of cardinals in 2010 when he was 76.

His death leaves the College of Cardinals with 219 members, 120 of whom are under the age of 80 and therefore eligible to vote in a conclave to elect a new pope.