

# Pope names Maltese bishop secretary-general of Synod of Bishops

VATICAN CITY (CNS) – Pope Francis has accepted the resignation of Italian Cardinal Lorenzo Baldisseri as secretary-general of the Synod of Bishops and appointed in his place its current pro-secretary-general, Maltese Bishop Mario Grech.

The Vatican made the announcement Sept. 16.

Cardinal Baldisseri, who had been the secretary-general since 2013, was to celebrate his 80th birthday Sept. 29.

Bishop Grech, the 63-year-old former bishop of Gozo, Malta, was meant to succeed the Italian cardinal when the pope named him pro-secretary-general in October 2019.

That appointment allowed Bishop Grech to work alongside Cardinal Baldisseri “to get to know directly the synodal institution and its members, as well as to obtain knowledge of the processes and instances of competence,” the Vatican said in an article released by the Vatican newspaper, L’Osservatore Romano last year.

As pro-secretary-general, Bishop Grech participated in the 2019 Synod of Bishops for the Amazon. That also helped the Maltese bishop “get to know directly the people involved in the synodal process in its celebratory phase, to accompany its implementation and subsequent developments, in full collaboration with the current secretary-general,” the Vatican had said.

By selecting a pro-secretary-general first before an eventual appointment as secretary-general, “Pope Francis confirms and strengthens the synodal methodology – first of all and in an

exemplary way within the institution itself – so that the general secretariat can serenely carry out its service in a sign of continuity and newness, as is fitting for the healthy development of the ecclesial tradition,” the Vatican said.