Vatican



The Vatican announced Jan. 25, 2020, that Pope Francis has approved the election of Italian Cardinal Giovanni Battista Re as dean of the College of Cardinals and of Argentine Cardinal Leonardo Sandri as the subdean. The two cardinals are pictured in a June 7, 2019, and Oct. 16, 2014, combination photo. (CNS/Paul Haring)

by Catholic News Service

View Author Profile

Join the Conversation

Send your thoughts to *Letters to the Editor*. Learn more

January 27, 2020

Share on BlueskyShare on FacebookShare on TwitterEmail to a friendPrint



The Vatican announced Jan. 25, 2020, that Pope Francis has approved the election of Italian Cardinal Giovanni Battista Re as dean of the College of Cardinals and of Argentine Cardinal Leonardo Sandri as the subdean. The two cardinals are pictured in a June 7, 2019, and Oct. 16, 2014, combination photo. (CNS/Paul Haring)

Pope Francis has approved the election of Italian Cardinal Giovanni Battista Re as dean of the College of Cardinals and of Argentine Cardinal Leonardo Sandri as the subdean.

The Vatican announced the elections Jan. 25, about a month after Italian Cardinal Angelo Sodano, 92, stepped down as dean and Francis announced he was changing church law to limit the dean's service to a five-year term, which is renewable once.

Re, who will celebrate his 86th birthday Jan. 30, had been subdean since June 2017. He was prefect of the Congregation for Bishops before his retirement in 2010.

Because he is over the age of 80, Re is not eligible to enter a conclave to elect a new pope. If the pope dies, it is the dean's task to inform heads of state and diplomats accredited to the Holy See, and he presides over the meetings of the entire College of Cardinals in the days preceding a conclave to elect a new pope.

As subdean, the 76-year-old Sandri, prefect of the Congregation for Eastern Churches, would preside over the actual election of a new pope in the Sistine Chapel.

The dean is elected from among the top-ranking cardinals, known as cardinal bishops. Currently they include: Re; Sandri; Sodano; Nigerian Cardinal Francis Arinze, 87; Italian Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, 85; Portuguese Cardinal Jose Saraiva Martins, 88; Italian Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Vatican secretary of state, 65; Canadian Cardinal Marc Ouellet, prefect of the Congregation for Bishops, 75; Italian Cardinal Fernando Filoni, grand master of the Equestrian Order of Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem, 73; Cardinal Antonios Naguib, retired patriarch of the Coptic Catholic Church, 84; Cardinal Bechara Rai, Maronite patriarch, 79; and Cardinal Louis Sako, the Chaldean Catholic patriarch, 71.

Advertisement