News

Fr. Adolfo Nicolas, superior general of the Society of Jesus, and Pope Francis, also a Jesuit, are seen together before celebrating Mass at the Church of the Gesu in Rome in this Jan. 3, 2014, file photo. Fr. Nicolas died May 20, 2020, in Tokyo. He was 84. (CNS/Paul Haring)

by Catholic News Service

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The Jesuit General Curia in Rome announced that its former superior general, Fr. Adolfo Nicolas, died May 20 in Tokyo. He was 84.

He was a member of the Jesuit community of Loyola House in Kamishakujii and had been ill for several years, reported ucanews.com.

A statement said he is deeply mourned by the Jesuits of Japan and Asia-Pacific, his family and compatriots in Spain, and his many friends around the world.

"I offer my sincere condolences to the Jesuit province of Japan, to Father Nicolas' family, to the Jesuits in Spain and the Philippines and to his many friends all around the world," said Fr. Arturo Sosa, current superior general.

"Father Nicolas gave of himself throughout his life. It was a life marked by intense service, calm availability and a deep ability to inculturate in Japan, where he went as a young Jesuit. It was a culture he loved dearly and to which he committed himself.

"His time as general was marked by his sense of humor, his courage, his humility and his close relationship with Pope Francis. All of us here at the Jesuit General Curia mourn him, and a special Mass will be offered here in Rome as soon as we can organize it."

Sosa said all who worked with Nicolas in the General Curia greatly appreciated his presence.

"He will be greatly mourned throughout the society as a wise, humble and dedicated Jesuit, a man of grace and wisdom, simple, unpretentious," he said.

Nicolas had a strong relationship with Pope Benedict and close and warm bonds with Francis.

Nicolas was born in Palencia, Spain, April 29, 1936. He entered the Society of Jesus in September 1953 and was ordained a priest March 17, 1967.

As a scholastic, he was sent to the mission of Japan, where he was a professor of theology, rector of scholastics and provincial, later dedicating himself to social work with immigrants in Tokyo.

For 10 years, he lived in the Philippines, serving as director of the East Asia Pastoral Institute and as president of the Conference of Provincials of East Asia and Oceania. After presenting his resignation as superior general of the Jesuits, he was a spiritual director at EAPI and in the Arrupe International Residence in Manila.

Nicolas served as superior general of the Jesuits from January 2008 to October 2016.

A memorial Mass will be celebrated in Rome in the Church of the Gesu at a date to be determined.

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