News

An older white man wearing cardinal's clothes and glasses transitioned to sunglasses raises h

Cardinal Geraldo Majella Agnelo, retired archbishop of São Salvador da Bahia, Brazil, who died Aug. 26, 2023, is seen entering a meeting of cardinals in the synod hall at the Vatican in March 2013 before the conclave that elected Pope Francis. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)



by Catholic News Service

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SÃO SALVADOR DA BAHIA, Brazil — August 28, 2023

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Retired Brazilian Cardinal Geraldo Majella Agnelo, a former archbishop of São Salvador da Bahia and former secretary of the then-Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments, died Aug. 26 at age 89.

He was made a cardinal by St. John Paul II in February 2001 at the same consistory where the then-Archbishop Jorge Mario Bergoglio, now Pope Francis, received his red hat.

In a condolence message sent to the current archbishop of São Salvador da Bahia, Cardinal Sergio da Rocha, Francis offered prayers for the deceased cardinal's eternal repose and "gratitude to God for his long years of dedicated service to Holy Mother Church, always guided by apostolic zeal in the various missions entrusted to him."

His death leaves the College of Cardinals with 221 members, 120 of whom are under the age of 80 and eligible to vote in a conclave.

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Born Oct. 19, 1933, in Juiz de Fora, Brazil, he was ordained for the Archdiocese of São Paulo in 1957.

He earned a doctorate in liturgy from the Pontifical Athenaeum of St. Anselm in Rome and taught liturgical and sacramental theology at seminaries in Brazil before St. Paul VI named him bishop of Toledo, Brazil, in May 1978. St. John Paul named him archbishop of Londrina in 1982 and then secretary of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments in 1991.

He returned to Brazil eight years later as archbishop of São Salvador da Bahia, the country's primatial see. He had served as president of the Brazilian bishops' conference and as one of the vice presidents of CELAM, the Latin American bishops' council. He retired in 2011.