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Pope Francis poses for a photo with bishops at the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Assumption in Jakarta, Indonesia, Sept. 4, 2024. Bishop Paskalis Bruno Syukur of Bogor stands in the second row, first on the right. (CNS/Vatican Media)

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Pope Francis has accepted the request of Indonesian Bishop Paskalis Bruno Syukur of Bogor to dispense him from becoming a cardinal as planned in December.

Matteo Bruni, director of the Vatican press office, said Syukur wanted "to grow further in priestly life, in his service to the Church and the people of God."

"Pope Francis accepted the request" from the bishop "to not be created cardinal in the next consistory," scheduled for Dec. 7 in Rome, Bruni said in a statement released late Oct. 22.

Bishop Antonius Subianto Bunyamin of Bandung, president of the Indonesian bishops' conference, told AsiaNews Oct. 23, that he was shaken by the news. But he added, "We appreciate (Bishop) Paskalis' decision. Surely he knows what is best for him, for his diocese and for the church in general. Let us pray."

Francis will now elevate 20 rather than 21 men to the College of Cardinals Dec. 7. He had announced the names of the cardinals-designate Oct. 6, just one month after visiting Jakarta, Indonesia, Sept. 3-6.

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Syukur is the second cardinal-designate named by Pope Francis to publicly request that he not be named to the College of Cardinals. In 2022, the pope accepted the request of retired Bishop Lucas Van Looy of Ghent, Belgium, to withdraw his nomination because he did not want to add to the suffering of survivors of clerical sexual abuse who had criticized his appointment as a cardinal.

Syukur, 62, made his solemn profession as a Franciscan in 1989 and was ordained to the priesthood in 1991. He served as provincial of the order in Indonesia from 2001 to 2009, when he moved to Rome as the order's general definitor for the Asia and Oceania region.

Francis appointed him bishop of the Diocese of Bogor in 2013, and he served as vice president of Indonesia's bishops' conference in 2020. He was elected secretary-general of the bishops' conference in 2022.