

Pope confirms Bertone as Vatican secretary of state

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Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, Vatican secretary of state, and Italy's Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi cut a ribbon to open an art exhibit in Rome Oct. 7. (CNS)

VATICAN CITY -- Pope Benedict XVI has reconfirmed Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone as Vatican secretary of state, praising the Italian prelate's capability, humanity and sense of faith.

As required of all Vatican department heads, Cardinal Bertone had offered his resignation when he turned 75 last December. He was named head of the Secretariat of State in 2006.

The pope's letter asking Cardinal Bertone to stay on in his post was published Jan. 21 at the top of the front page of the Vatican newspaper, *L'Osservatore Romano*, under the headline, "A precious collaboration."

Cardinal Bertone was the No. 2 official at the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith for several years under Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, now Pope Benedict.

While 75 remains the normal retirement age for top Vatican officials, several department heads have served well past that age.

The current roster of Roman Curia heads includes a number of over-75 cardinals: Cardinal Giovanni Battista Re, head of the Congregation for Bishops; Cardinal Claudio Hummes, head of the Congregation for Clergy; Cardinal Franc Rode, head of the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life; Cardinal Walter Kasper, head of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity; and Cardinal Paul Cordes, head of the Pontifical Council *Cor Unum*.

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