

Portuguese Cardinal Policarpo, 78, dies while on retreat

Cindy Wooden Catholic News Service | Mar. 13, 2014

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Portuguese Cardinal Jose da Cruz Policarpo, the retired archbishop of Lisbon, died Wednesday at the age of 78, apparently of a ruptured aortic aneurysm. He had been on retreat in Fatima when he experienced chest pains and was taken to a hospital in Lisbon, where he died.

He led the church in Portugal from 1998 to 2013, serving as archbishop or, officially, as "patriarch of Lisbon." Made a cardinal by Pope John Paul II in 2001, he participated in the 2005 conclave that elected Pope Benedict XVI and in the 2013 conclave that elected Pope Francis.

In an interview with Catholic News Service on the eve of the 2005 conclave, Policarpo said the church needed to find new ways to proclaim the faith. Evangelizing "must come, above all, from the deep experience of living the love of God and the Holy Spirit," he said. "There's no more room for a Christian to stay hidden" or confined to "the inside of the church."

A prolific writer and dedicated teacher, he spent most of his priesthood working in the field of education, either in seminaries or at the Portuguese Catholic University.

Born in 1936 in Alvorinha, Portugal, Jose da Cruz Policarpo studied at the minor seminaries of Santarem and Almada before completing his preparation for the priesthood at Christ the King Seminary in Olivais.

Ordained to the priesthood in 1961, he was sent to Rome for further studies at the Pontifical Gregorian University, earning his degree in dogmatic theology in 1968. Between 1963 and 1968 he also taught at the minor seminary at Penafirme, Portugal.

In 1970 he began teaching at the Portuguese Catholic University and simultaneously serving as rector of the Olivais seminary. At the university, he was director of the theology faculty from 1974 to 1980 and again from 1985 to 1988, when he became rector of the university.

Named an auxiliary bishop of Lisbon in 1978, he was appointed coadjutor of the archdiocese in 1997 and became archbishop almost exactly a year later.

His death leaves the College of Cardinals with 217 members, 120 of whom were under the age of 80 and, therefore, eligible to participate in a conclave.

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