

# Amid St. Peter's crowd, new cardinal hears his name

VATICAN CITY – U.S. Cardinal-designate John P. Foley, a Philadelphia native, was standing in the middle of St. Peter's Square among a sea of 30,000 pilgrims when Pope Benedict XVI named him a cardinal.

Though he knew the previous day he was going to be one of 23 people to receive a red hat, the Oct. 17 announcement was going to fall on the same morning he had a follow-up visit with his eye doctor.

"I didn't get back in time to be there at the beginning of the audience and I didn't have my glad rags on," meaning his formal clerical dress, so he said he just snuck inconspicuously into the middle of the crowd.

He told Catholic News Service he never expected to be the second new cardinal listed after the senior Vatican prefect, Cardinal-designate Leonardo Sandri.

When the pope "started the list there I was No. 2 on the list and that was a surprise," Cardinal-designate Foley said.

He said a pilgrim standing next to him asked him if he knew any of the men the pope had just named to be cardinal.

"I said 'Yes, I know quite a few of them.' And I said 'I am one of them,' Well, I don't think he believed me," he said laughing.

"What would I be doing standing out in the middle of St. Peter's Square, you know. But I thought it would be nice to hear the announcement anyway," he said happily.

The Columbia University journalism school graduate and former editor of The Catholic Standard and Times, Philadelphia archdiocesan newspaper, headed the Pontifical Council for Social Communications for 23 years. In June, Pope Benedict XVI named him pro-grand master of the Knights of the Holy Sepulcher, a chivalric organization dedicated to supporting the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem and to

responding to the needs of Catholics in the Holy Land.

He turned many years of journalistic experience into a great asset for the universal church. His media-friendly style and quick sense of humor shine in person and throughout the numerous speeches and homilies he has delivered around the world.

This self-described “chocoholic” often speaks of the joys of working for the church, but tells his audiences that while the pay is not that great, “the benefits are out of this world.”

Cardinal-designate Foley, one of 23 cardinals named Oct. 17 by Pope Benedict XVI, will receive his red hat in a Nov. 24 consistory at the Vatican.

His new post as pro-grand master has taken him out of the public spotlight – he was known worldwide for his English-language commentary for major papal ceremonies. But he was still traveling the world promoting the church’s mandate for using the media ethically when he delivered an Oct. 11 address to advertisers in Oslo, Norway.

Cardinal-designate Foley urged his audience to plug their products for the common good and appealed for major reform of campaign financing legislation, including in the United States. He asked that candidates be able to advertise and “present their message without financial contributions corrupting or co-opting them.”

In June, when he left his communications job, Cardinal-designate Foley told Catholic News Service he hoped he had accomplished two primary goals: “First, that the church recognize the importance of the media for communicating the good news of Jesus Christ”; and second, that church leaders understand “the communications media are not threats, but opportunities.”

He has said he loved being able to merge his love for God and the media.

“In my work as a priest and as an archbishop, I am able to do two things I love very much: to be active in communications and to tell people about Jesus,” he said in May 6 commencement address to students at the University of Portland, Ore.

Under his leadership, the social communications council issued separate documents promoting ethical standards in advertising, communications and on the Internet.

Another council document denounced pornography.

When the Vatican started to investigate the possibility of going online, Cardinal-designate Foley lobbied tirelessly for the Holy See to be given its own top-level domain.

“We were first told that we should be part of .it for Italy; I told them we were surrounded by It; that in another sense, we were It, but we were not in It.”

After refusing to settle for .it and .org, he succeeded in getting the Vatican the top-level domain of .va.

“For us that is very important because you can be sure that anything coming from .va is authentic ... material from the Vatican and the Holy See,” he said in a May 10 speech to former classmates from St. Joseph’s University in Philadelphia.

Born in Darby, Pa., Nov. 11, 1935, he was ordained a priest in Philadelphia when he was 26 years old.

He served as assistant pastor at Sacred Heart Church in Havertown, Pa., and later at St. John the Evangelist Church in Philadelphia, starting in 1966.

Cardinal-designate Foley said his experience in journalism dated back to the seventh grade when he started writing radio plays on the lives of saints. As a teen, he was also asked to be an announcer for Sunday morning programming on then-station WJMJ, now WNWR, in Philadelphia.

His re-launched his radio career in 1966 as co-producer and co-host of the Philadelphia Catholic Hour on WFIL radio.

Cardinal-designate Foley also appeared on television during his college years in a weekly college debate program and later co-produced a 20-program televised series on “The Making of a Priest.”

Between stints as assistant editor of The Catholic Standard and Times in the 1960s, he conducted his graduate studies in philosophy in Rome, where he also served as a journalist covering the news from Rome and the Second Vatican Council, 1963-1965.

In 1970, he was appointed editor of The Catholic Standard and Times until 1984,

when Pope John Paul II appointed him head of the Vatican body for social communications. He was ordained an archbishop the same year.

Cardinal-designate Foley has received numerous honorary degrees and awards, including the Catholic Press Association's highest prize, the St. Francis de Sales Award.