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Telegram of condolences for the death of Cardinal Giovanni Coppa, noted Latin scholar and papal representative

Vatican City, 17 May 2016 – Pope Francis has sent a telegram of condolences to Cardinal Angelo Sodano, dean of the College of Cardinals, following the death yesterday of Cardinal Giovanni Coppa, of the Italian diocese of Alba.

In the text the Holy Father expresses his sincere admiration and esteem for a "man of the Church who lived faithfully his long and fruitful priesthood and episcopate in the service of the Gospel and of the Holy See", and recalls with gratitude his "generous and competent" work as the "diligent collaborator with six popes who entrusted delicate and important offices to him."

Francis recalls that the departed Cardinal was first called to the Apostolic Chancery, then continuing his mission in the Secretariat of State. He cooperated in the work of Vatican Council II as a Latin scholar, as an assessor at the Secretariat of State, and as a delegate in the papal representations, always giving witness to "pastoral wisdom and thoughtful attention to the needs of others, reaching out to all with goodness and gentleness". As papal representative at the apostolic nunciature in Prague, he dedicated himself "intensely and fruitfully to the spiritual good of the nation".

"I offer heartfelt prayers so that, by the intercession of the Virgin Mary and St. Ambrose, of whom he was a renowned scholar, the Lord may welcome the late cardinal in His eternal joy and peace, and I send my apostolic blessing to all those who share in the sorrow for the loss of this zealous pastor", concluded the Holy Father.