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Comedy of errors: Cardinal's arrival in New Zealand marked by miscues

by Michael Otto by Catholic News Service

Wellington, New Zealand — A miscommunication between the Vatican and New Zealand church officials resulted in an adventurous arrival for the prelate who coordinates a key commission of cardinals that advises Pope Francis.

Honduran Cardinal Oscar Rodriguez Maradiaga arrived Oct. 9 in Wellington. But New Zealand Catholic church officials were expecting him to arrive the next day after being given the wrong information by Vatican authorities.

Rodriguez Maradiaga, who on Oct. 3 finished a meeting with Pope Francis and the Council of Cardinals, endured the not unusual "bumpy" arrival into Wellington because of high winds, but there was no one to meet him at Wellington airport.

So the polyglot cardinal caught a taxi and asked the driver to take him to the Catholic cathedral.

The taxi driver went to a Baptist church, and Rodriguez Maradiaga had to advise him to use his GPS to find the Catholic destination.

When he finally arrived, the cardinal was let into Viard House near Sacred Heart Cathedral by the parish priest, Fr. James Lyons.

Archbishop John Dew was shopping at the supermarket at the time, and when he returned with his shopping bags, he found one of the most influential cardinals in the Catholic church waiting in his kitchen.

New Zealand church officials checked if the other details of his visit were correctly supplied by Rome.

They were.

After making the long trip, the cardinal said he was grateful to be able to enjoy an extra day in New Zealand.

During his visit, Rodriguez Maradiaga met with New Zealand's Catholic bishops, who were gathered in Wellington.

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