NATIONAL CATHOLIC REPORTER
Published on *National Catholic Reporter* (http://ncronline.org)

# Pope names Maltese monsignor to post at new economy secretariat

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Vatican City

Pope Francis has named the Maltese monsignor who initially served as his personal secretary to be the general secretary of the new Secretariat for the Economy.

Msgr. Alfred Xuereb, 55, had served as assistant personal secretary to Pope Benedict XVI and stepped up as Pope Francis' secretary when the new pope was elected in March 2013.

In November, Pope Francis named Xuereb his personal delegate to the commissions reviewing the activity and mission of the Institute for the Works of Religion -- commonly called the Vatican bank -- and the commission that was studying the economic and administrative structures of the Holy See.

After meeting his international council of eight cardinals advising him on the reform of the Roman Curia and the governance of the church, Pope Francis established the new secretariat Feb. 24 and named Cardinal George Pell of Sydney to be its prefect.

Pope Francis has given the new secretariat and a 15-member council that will oversee it "authority over all the economic and administrative activities within the Holy See and the Vatican City State," including budget making, financial planning, hiring, procurement and the preparation of detailed financial statements.

After years of being simply a quiet presence at the side of a pope, Xuereb had a moment of fame last July. Speaking to novices gathered at the Vatican for a pilgrimage, Pope Francis spoke of his horror at seeing priests and religious driving fancy new cars. He said he knew some of the people in the audience were thinking, "So do we now have to go by bicycle, Father?" but he responded: "Bicycles are good! Msgr. Alfred rides a bicycle. He goes by bike."

**Source URL (retrieved on *07/22/2014 - 13:14*):** http://ncronline.org/news/vatican/pope-names-maltese-monsignor-post-new-economy-secretariat