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News in Brief

Death of Cardinal Elio Sgreccia, president emeritus of the Pontifical Academy for Life

The Pontifical Academy for Life, through its president Archbishop Vincenzo Paglia, chancellor Renzo Pegoraro, and all the staff of the institution, sadly announced the death, this morning, of Cardinal Elio Sgreccia, its president emeritus.

“Ever since the establishment of the Pontifical Academy on 11 February 1994” - says a statement from the Academy - “Cardinal Sgreccia was the protagonist and the courageous soul of our institution, supporting and promoting the activities of study and protection of human life faced with the challenges posed by technology and biomedical progress”.

The Pontifical Academy for Life is grateful for the valuable and positive work of Cardinal Sgreccia and his important contribution to scientific issues and the academic sector, for the benefit of the teaching of the Church. The cardinal continued to follow the activities of the institution and was always informed of its current initiatives. With discretion and sensitivity he accompanied the work of the Pontifical Academy, participating in the Assemblies and meeting with the Pope.

“The Pontifical Academy for Life” - continues the text – “pursues the path set out by Cardinal Sgreccia, with the same boldness when it comes to capturing the signs of the times and responding to the issues regarding the meaning of our contemporary humanity”.

Cardinal Sgreccia was born in Nidastore di Arcevia, Ancona, Italy on 6 June 1928 and was ordained a priest in 1952. In 1974 he became spiritual assistant at the Faculty of Medicine and Surgery of the Catholic University of the Sacred Heart. First professor of Bioethics in the same university, he became professor in 1990. He founded and directed the bioethics journal *Medicina e Morale*. In the 1980s he served as Holy See Observer in the Ethics Committee of the Council of Europe. From 1990 to 2006 he was a member of the National Bioethics Committee of Italy. Among his various works, it is worth mentioning the *Manual of Bioethics for Physicians and Biologists*, in two volumes, translated into several languages.

From 1992 to 2000 he was also director of the Bioethics Institute. Pope John Paul II appointed him bishop on 5 November 1992. From 3 January 2005 until 17 June 2008 he served as president of the Pontifical Academy for Life, of which he remained president emeritus. Pope Benedict XVI created him cardinal in 2010.

In recent days, following his admission to the Gemelli Polyclinic in Rome, Cardinal Sgreccia expressed his desire to return to his home in Rome, where he died today, Wednesday, June 5 at 12.15.

His niece, the professor Palma Sgreccia, remembers him as “a man of faith, characterized by a great sobriety of life, who always tried to promote the good of all. In every decision he was guided by the inspiration of faith and the power of reason”.
