

Diocese of Beaumont mourns the death of Vatican's Ambassador to the U.S.

Catholics in Southeast Texas are mourning the death of Italian Archbishop Peitro Sambini, the Vatican nuncio to the United States. The Archbishop, who served as the Vatican's ambassador to the U.S., died late yesterday.

"Archbishop Sambini, will be greatly missed by the Church in this country. I am asking Southeast Texas Catholics to pray for the Archbishop's family and the repose of his soul at Masses this weekend, said Bishop Curtis Guillory, Bishop of the Diocese of Beaumont.

"I first met Archbishop Sambini in 2004 in Jerusalem when he was the Vatican nuncio and I was visiting some of the sites there that Catholic Relief Services supports. I was to have a twenty minute meeting with him but instead we met for over an hour. During our conversation, I realized he was not only a diplomat but also deeply spiritual," said Bishop Guillory.

Archbishop Sambini died late July 27 at John Hopkins Medical Center in Baltimore after a hospitalization that began with lung surgery.

A veteran Vatican diplomat, the Archbishop was appointed as U.S. nuncio or ambassador in December 2005 by Pope Benedict XVI. Prior to that he had been ambassador to Israel and Cyprus.

In issuing a statement today, Bishop Guillory spoke of the Archbishop's commitment to the people of the United States, " Archbishop Sambini loved this country. We will miss him and his leadership as ambassador from the Vatican."