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## The New York Times

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OBITUARIES Archbishop Marcinkus, 84, Banker at the Vatican, Dies

### *Archbishop Marcinkus, 84, Banker at the Vatican, Dies*

By Margalit Fox

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Paul C. Marcinkus, a prominent American archbishop and longtime head of the Vatican bank who was linked to a major Italian banking scandal in the 1980's, was found dead on Monday at his home in Sun City, Ariz. He was 84.

No cause of death had been determined yesterday, according to a spokeswoman for the Roman Catholic Diocese of Phoenix, which announced the death.

A native of Cicero, Ill., Archbishop Marcinkus (pronounced mar-SINK-us) was for decades one of the highest-ranking American prelates in the Vatican, serving Popes John XXIII, Paul VI and John Paul II.

Associated with the Vatican bank for more than 20 years, the archbishop was its president from 1971 to 1989. After stepping down as the bank's president, Archbishop Marcinkus became the governor of Vatican City. He retired from papal service the next year.

Officially known as the Institute for Religious Works, the Vatican bank manages the Holy See's financial investments and oversees funds entrusted to it by religious orders and individuals.

Archbishop Marcinkus was indicted but never tried in the banking scandal, which peaked in 1982. The stuff of international thrillers, the scandal would ultimately involve Machiavellian intrigue, mysterious death and the loss of more than \$1 billion.

The archbishop had also been linked to a previous Italian banking scandal, which made headlines in the mid-1970's.

The 1980's scandal centered on the collapse of Banco Ambrosiano, a bank in Milan with ties to the Vatican. Italy's largest investment bank, Banco Ambrosiano went under in 1982. The Vatican bank owned about 1.5 percent of Banco Ambrosiano. Ambrosiano's president, the Italian financier Roberto Calvi, was a friend of Archbishop Marcinkus.

The missing money turned out to have been lent to 10 shadowy companies controlled by the Vatican bank. Vatican officials later agreed to pay about \$240 million to Ambrosiano's creditors as a good-will gesture, but denied any wrongdoing.

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Popularly known as "God's banker," Mr. Calvi was tried and convicted in connection with the Ambrosiano scandal. But he disappeared from Italy during his appeal, and in June 1982, his body was found hanging beneath a bridge in London.

Initially ruled a suicide, Mr. Calvi's death was later deemed a homicide. In October of last year, five people went on trial in Rome on charges connected with his death.

Archbishop Marcinkus was indicted in 1982 in connection with the banking scandal. In 1987, the Italian constitutional court quashed the archbishop's arrest warrant, and those for two other executives of the Vatican bank, ruling that as Vatican employees, they were immune from prosecution.

Throughout his life, Archbishop Marcinkus maintained his innocence in the scandal; the Vatican also publicly denied any wrongdoing by him or the bank.

After Archbishop Marcinkus stepped down as head of the bank in 1989, the Vatican turned over its management to a board of lay financial experts.

Paul Casimir Marcinkus was born in Cicero on Jan. 15, 1922, to a Lithuanian-American family; his father, Michael, worked as a window washer. In 1947, after graduating from the University of St. Mary of the Lake Seminary in Mundelein, Ill., Paul Marcinkus was ordained as a priest in the archdiocese of Chicago. He also held doctorates in canon law and theology from the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome.

In 1952, Father Marcinkus began his long association with the Holy See, serving in the Vatican Secretariat. In 1955, he moved to the Vatican Diplomatic Service, where he organized papal trips abroad, overseeing security and acting as an occasional translator for Pope Paul VI.

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In 1979, describing Father Marcinkus during his early years at the Vatican, The New York Times said: "He was considered an ecclesiastical maverick, unceremonious to the point of bluntness, one of the few priests in Rome who played golf."

Father Marcinkus was ordained a bishop in 1969. The next year, traveling with Pope Paul in Manila, he helped foil an attack on the pope by a knife-wielding man. An intimate of Pope Paul's from then on, Bishop Marcinkus was named secretary of the Vatican bank in 1968.

In the mid-1970's, Bishop Marcinkus was linked to a banking scandal involving the Sicilian financier Michele Sindona. Mr. Sindona had advised the Holy See and Bishop Marcinkus on handling its assets and investments. When Mr. Sindona's financial empire collapsed, the Vatican suffered losses reported to be in the tens of millions of dollars.

(In March 1986, Mr. Sindona was convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment for contracting the assassination, in 1979, of the lawyer appointed to liquidate his failed Italian banks. Four days after his sentencing, he died. The cause was cyanide poisoning, but the Italian authorities were unable to determine whether he had been murdered or had committed suicide.)

After Pope Paul's death in 1978, Bishop Marcinkus was reconfirmed as Vatican Bank president by Pope John Paul II, who ordained him an archbishop in 1981.

Much as he had done for Pope Paul, Archbishop Marcinkus oversaw the intricacies of John Paul II's international trips, traveling as an advance man to cities around the world before papal visits.

In September 1987, Archbishop Marcinkus filed suit in State Supreme Court in Manhattan to suppress a thriller, "In the Name of the Father," that fancifully portrayed him as ordering the assassination of Yuri V. Andropov, the Soviet leader, in 1984, but his request was denied.

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After retiring from papal service in 1990, Archbishop Marcinkus returned to do parish work in Chicago. In the early 1990's, he moved to Sun City.

**Information on survivors could not immediately be confirmed.**

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