

THE CATHOLIC
Spirit

Pope Benedict XVI Remembered by Bishop Brennan as ‘Masterful Theologian’ and ‘Gentle, Kindly Soul’

By Colleen Rowan

“We gather this evening to offer this Mass for the repose of the soul of Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI who spent more than 70 years—his entire adult life—in the service of God’s church as priest, bishop, and finally pope,” Bishop Mark Brennan said at the beginning of the memorial Mass he celebrated for the late pontiff Jan. 4. “We pray that God’s peace may now be his as he has finally laid down the burdens, not just of office but of any of his time of suffering in this world.”

The Mass was celebrated in thanksgiving for Pope Benedict’s life and pontificate at the Cathedral of St. Joseph in Wheeling with area priests concelebrating. Pope Benedict died Dec. 31, 2022, at the age of 95 in his residence at the Vatican. Faithful from around the Wheeling area attended the Mass to pray for the late pope, who Bishop Brennan said was a “masterful theologian” and a “gentle, kindly soul.”

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Cardinal Joseph A. Ratzinger was elected pope on April 19, 2005, and took the name Benedict XVI. On Feb. 11, 2013, he announced he was resigning from the papacy, citing his advanced age and lack of strength as unsuitable for the exercise of his office, Catholic News Agency reported.

In beginning his homily, Bishop Brennan recalled the gospel for the Mass (John 21: 15-19) as Jesus asked Peter three times if he loved him. Peter, three times affirmed, that yes, he loved Jesus. The Lord of course not only forgave him his later denial of him but then gave him the task of feeding his sheep, of leading his church, the bishop said.

“The church asked Joseph Ratzinger three times if, out of love for the Lord and the church, he would serve God’s people first as a priest, then as a bishop, and finally as pope,” Bishop Brennan said. “Despite his innate modesty and an awareness of his human frailty, the future pope said to Jesus, yes I love you and I will tend your sheep.”

“We gather this evening to honor and pray for a man who, as I said at the beginning of Mass, served the church for over 70 years, assuming the papacy at an age when

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Colleen Rowan Photo

At right: A portrait of Pope Benedict XVI is shown at the Cathedral of St. Joseph in Wheeling Jan. 4. That evening, a memorial Mass was celebrated for the late pontiff by Bishop Mark Brennan with area priests concelebrating.



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Obituary

Deacon Donald Michael Hammond

Deacon Donald Michael Hammond, 70, of Radford, Va., and formerly of Bluefield, Va., died Saturday, December 31, 2022, at his home surrounded by his family.



Deacon Don was born September 10, 1952, in Bluefield, W.Va. and is preceded in death by his parents, John Samuel Hammond and Carol and Robert Stafford, Sr.

Don graduated from Bluefield High School in 1970, attended Marshall University, served in the U.S. Navy from 1972 to 1977, and was then employed by Mountaineer Bowling Center and Sandy Valley Lanes. In October 2004, Don was ordained a permanent deacon in the Roman Catholic church in the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston. He was employed as Catholic Campus Minister at Concord University, Athens, W.Va., by the diocese and was also employed by Sacred Heart Catholic Church, Bluefield, W.Va. as pastoral associate. After retiring and moving to Radford, Va., he was incardinated in the Diocese of Richmond in 2021 and assigned to St. Jude Catholic Church, Christiansburg, Va.

Don had a charismatic gift of prayer and praise and, along with the Sacred Heart Music Ministry, led many to the heart of Jesus with his music. In 2011, he wrote "Mass in the Key of Praise" that has been used throughout the United States. Along with this gift of music, he preached God's word willingly and held dear the students at Concord University that attended Mass at the Newman Center. The saying, "If you feed them, they will come", rang true at the CU Newman Center as he fed many students physically, spiritually and emotionally during his

18 years in that ministry.

Pastorally, Don served Bluefield and Princeton Sacred Heart Churches by witnessing marriages, visiting the sick, celebrating funerals and wake services and baptizing parishioners.

Throughout his ministry, he formed lasting friendships.

In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by his brother, Sean Michael Hammond and Sean's wife, Heidi. He is survived by his wife of 48 years, Loretta; daughters, Amy Hammond of Radford, Va. and Laura Hubble (Eric) of Christiansburg, Va. He was Nonno to Andrew and Natalina Hubble of Christiansburg, Va. His siblings are Julie Francisco (John) of Scott Depot, W.Va., Lori Dorencamp (Craig) of Lantana, Fla., Robert Stafford, Jr. of Tazewell, Va., Sarah Bosco (Jay) of Lake Charles Shores, Fla., and John Hammond

(Donna) of Dalton, Ga.; his uncle James Hammond of Richlands, Va.; and his father's wife, Linda Hammond of Dalton, Ga.; several nieces, nephews and cousins.

A Mass of Christian Burial will take place on Monday, January 9, 2023, at 11 a.m. at the Sacred Heart Catholic Church, Bluefield, with Celebrant Father Paul Wharton. Visitation will be one hour prior to Mass.

A Memorial Mass will be held at a later date at St. Jude Catholic Church, Christiansburg, Va., where inurnment will be at St. Jude's Columbarium.

In lieu of flowers, Don has requested donations be made to the Sacred Heart Food Pantry, PO Box 608, Bluefield, WV 24701 or St. Jude Catholic Church, 1740 Tyler Road, Christiansburg, VA 24073.

The Hammond family is in the care of Mullins Funeral Home & Crematory in Radford, Virginia. www.mullinsfuneralhome.com.

To Report Suspected Cases of Sexual Abuse of Children: The Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston encourages reporting to civil authorities first and foremost if a crime has been committed. We also encourage utilizing www.reportbishopabuse.org to make a report about any bishop in the U.S. If you have reason to believe that a bishop has engaged in sexual misconduct or has interfered with an investigation into sexual misconduct, please contact civil authorities in the applicable jurisdiction and visit www.reportbishopabuse.org.

To Report to Civil Authorities: Contact your local law enforcement: numbers will vary based on your location. If you believe someone is in immediate danger, call 911. To confidentially report any incidence of suspected child abuse or neglect, including sexual abuse, contact the West Virginia Bureau for Children and Families' Child Protective Services by calling the Child Abuse Hotline at 800.352.6513. You may report anonymously to this hotline if you prefer.

To Report to Diocesan Authorities: The diocese encourages reporting to the appropriate civil authorities first and foremost if a crime has been committed. The diocese also encourages reporting to the appropriate church authorities. To report suspected cases of sexual abuse of children by personnel of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston to the Diocese, contact one of the following designees at 1.888.434.6237 or 304.233.0880: Mr. Bryan Minor, ext. 263; Mr. Tim Bishop, ext. 353; or Very Rev. Dennis Schuelkens, Jr., V.E., ext. 270. You may also call the Diocese's Office of Safe Environment at 304.230.1504. You may also call the Diocese's sexual abuse hotline at 833.230.5656. Complaint forms are available online at www.dwc.org, click "Diocese" on the menu bar, then "Offices," then "Safe Environment", then "Download Files and Forms." The form is titled "Complaint Form for Allegations of Sexual Abuse of a Minor." The form may be returned via U.S. mail to: Office of Safe Environment, Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, PO Box 230, Wheeling WV 26003.

To Report to the Diocese's Victim Assistance Coordinator: please call Dr. Patricia Bailey at 304.242.6988. In addition to the methods listed above for reporting sexual abuse, the Diocese also has partnered with Navex Global to offer the EthicsPoint platform to report other, additional concerns, such as suspected financial, professional, and personal misconduct of a priest, deacon, religious, or lay employee of the Diocese or any Catholic parish or school in West Virginia. The EthicsPoint platform can be accessed via www.dwc.org, under "Accountability", then "Report Misconduct" or by calling 844.723.8381. EthicsPoint is a third-party reporting system that reports to civil authorities where applicable and Diocesan authorities, and the identity of the person reporting is protected. Links and information: WV Department of Health and Human Resources: <https://www.wvdhhr.org/report.asp>. West Virginia State Police, Crimes Against Children Unit: 304-293-6400.

Sexual Abuse Awareness Training

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) requires that all Dioceses/Eparchies have in place a Safe Environment Program for the protection of children and young people. In accordance with these requirements, the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston's Safe Environment Program consists of the following components for persons seeking employment or to volunteer—directly or indirectly—with children: background check; receipt of the Diocese's Policy Relating to Sexual Abuse of Children; and sexual abuse awareness training for adults. Sexual abuse awareness training may be completed online or via live workshop. For more information on the Office of Safe Environment, please go to www.dwc.org, click "Diocese", then "Offices," then "Office of Safe Environment."



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January 6, 2023, Vol. 54, No. 1

Publisher: Bishop Mark E. Brennan.....
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Member
Catholic Press Association
West Virginia Press Association
National Press Photographers Association, Inc.




Published 24 times per year. All issues sent to each registered Catholic household free of charge. Donations to help offset the cost of producing The Catholic Spirit are welcomed. Out-of-diocese subscriptions are \$25 annually. The Catholic Spirit intends its news reports to be fair and accurate in every regard. The opinions of correspondents do not necessarily reflect the opinions of The Catholic Spirit. Submission of news releases, stories and color photos welcomed and encouraged. Not responsible for unsolicited material.



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Pope...

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most adults have retired from work and remaining in that position until he recognized at age 85 that he no longer had the stamina to continue," the bishop said. "And in an act of great humility, he chose not to cling to his legitimate authority but to relinquish it and retire."

Bishop Brennan continued saying that in Pope John Paul II the church had an accomplished philosopher.

"We had in Benedict a masterful theologian. He knew well the Bible and the church's tradition — the twin sources because they come from the same ultimate source, God — twin sources of divine revelation and he reflected on them throughout his life to offer light and encouragement to today's Catholics and to others," Bishop Brennan said, noting that this is evident in Pope Benedict's encyclicals on love, hope, and faith, as well as the biography the late pope wrote, in three volumes, on the life of Jesus.

All of these works are readable, Bishop Brennan said, and one does not need to possess a theological degree to understand what Pope Benedict was saying.



Colleen Rowan Photo

After the memorial Mass for Pope Benedict XVI at the cathedral, Deacon Paul Lim stops in front of the late pontiff's portrait to pray.

As a young priest, Father Ratzinger was a "peritus" (Latin for an expert) at the Second Vatican Council, Bishop Brennan said, and he made significant contributions to some of its major documents, especially "Dei Verbum" (Latin for the word of God) on Divine Revelation. He saw the need for renewal in the church, which had prompted Pope John XXIII to call the council and he embraced its teachings, Bishop Brennan said. As a priest intimately involved in the council's deliberations, he also lamented as others did the distorted interpretations of the council that some people advocated.

"Some commentators love to portray Cardinal Ratzinger as a really tough conservative when he served Pope John Paul II as the head of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith," Bishop Brennan said. "His role in that office was to protect the integrity of Catholic faith all across the



Bishop Mark Brennan offers his homily at the memorial Mass he celebrated for Pope Benedict XVI at the Cathedral of St. Joseph in Wheeling Jan. 4.

board. That was his job. ... What his critics often objected to, however, was really the Catholic teaching in itself in such areas as sexuality and marriage, respect for the dignity of human life at its very beginning and at its end, and the relationship of Jesus Christ to non-western peoples. It was Cardinal Ratzinger's responsibility to uphold the authentic teaching of the church, the wisdom that the Holy Spirit had guided the church to understand over the centuries. He would have held to those same teachings as the young priest who pressed for reforms at the Second Vatican Council. He was never God's rottweiler. He pointed out the errors that some taught, so that our people would not be misled. Bad thinking leads to bad living. He knew that, so he tried to preserve the integrity of the Catholic faith. It is rather his critics whose moral values and love of truth had decayed over time as they went from one fad to another.

"Now this gentle, kindly soul has come to the end of his earthly life," the bishop continued, saying that in retirement while praying Pope Benedict surely identified with the words of Job in the first reading for the Mass: "I know that my Vindicator lives, and that he will at last stand forth upon the dust; whom I myself shall see: my own eyes, not another's, shall behold him; and from my flesh I shall see God; my inmost being is consumed with longing" (Job 19:1, 23-27).

Continuing, Bishop Brennan said as a priest, bishop and pope, "Benedict remained one of us, a believer in the same truths we profess in the Creed, a disciple challenged to practice justice and charity with others, a Christian who hoped for the eternal life God has promised those who are faithful to him. He must have been consumed as he sensed his end coming near with the longing to behold the risen Lord once his own flesh was raised from the dead. In his long life, Benedict did what we all must do — trust in a God whom we

cannot see, hear, or touch. St. Paul tells us in our second reading, 'We walk by faith, not by sight.' Our true homeland, Paul says, is not where we are from on this earth, but home is where the Lord Jesus is. So, Paul says "we are courageous, and we would rather leave the body and go home to the Lord. Therefore, we aspire to please him, whether we are at home or away" (2 Corinthians 5:1, 6-10).

Pope or newest convert to the faith, Bishop Brennan said, pointing again to St. Paul's words in the second reading: "we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each may receive recompense, according to what he did in the body, whether good or evil" (2 Corinthians 5:1, 6-10).

Bishop Brennan said it is a mistake to declare someone blessed before his life ends and even shortly after death. "Some time is needed to assess the person's life and character," the bishop said. "But we may fondly hope that as he was drawing his last breath, Benedict sensed the Lord's nearness and would soon hear the words of Christ: Well done, my good and faithful ser-



Colleen Rowan Photo

Cathedral altar servers Tammy Morris, Zac Gordon, and Julia Sheets (standing from bottom to top) join in singing the Marian Antiphon, "Salve Regina" at the end of the memorial Mass for Pope Benedict XVI.

“We gather this evening to honor and pray for a man who ... served the church for over 70 years, assuming the papacy at an age when most adults have retired from work and remaining in that position until he recognized at age 85 that he no longer had the stamina to continue.”

—Bishop Mark Brennan, memorial Mass for Pope Benedict XVI

A Mother-in-Law's Blessing



Throughout this Diocesan Year of the National Eucharistic Revival, each print edition of *The Catholic Spirit* (published on the First Friday of each month) will feature a guest article on the Eucharist.

Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston

By Bernadette McMasters Kime, Doctor of Ministry, Director of the Office of Worship and Sacraments, Point Person for the USCCB Eucharistic Revival for the Diocese of Wheeling Charleston

Since January is the Month of the Family, where we remember Mary, Jesus, and Joseph as a family unit, I would like to share a story about my family. As with any couple when they marry, it is not only the two of them, but rather two entire families come together. Although we know little about Joseph's parents, tradition tells us that Joachim and Ann were Mary's parents and therefore, Joseph's in-laws.

When I first met my soon to be mother-in-law, I was amazed by this petite Japanese woman in her 80's who never seemed to slow down. She was constantly in motion, like the Energizer Bunny. As I got to know her, I admired her strong will, especially knowing that she left her home in Japan at a young age to marry an American soldier and start a family in a foreign land.

About three years ago, she was not feeling well and after a doctor's visit, was told she had cancer in some of her organs (pancreas, stomach, etc.). After surgery, it seemed that all the cancer had been removed and she slowly gained her strength back. But she started having back pain and was told she now had bone cancer in her spine. Unfortunately, we soon learned the cancer was spreading rapidly and categorized as stage 4. Her words were, "I am going to fight this cancer." She endured 3 rounds of intense chemotherapy treatment. Finally, the cancer specialist declared that the chemotherapy is not working, the cancer is spreading, and there is nothing more that the medical professionals can do.

So you may ask, what does this have to do with the Eucharist and the Eucharistic Revival? Well, you

will soon see. My mother-in-law would often tell me that she loved going to the Catholic Church in the little town where she used to live. Since she never learned to drive, once she moved out to the country, she was no longer able to go, and this made her sad. While she was not a Christian, she has always had a devout faith in God, Jesus, and the Blessed Mother. She often said she wished that she understood more about the Church. One morning when she was visiting, she was mumbling on the couch. My youngest daughter asked her who she was talking to, and she said "Jesus". Msgr. Gene Ostrowski, a friend to me and my husband, would come and see her and pray with her. She shared with me how special those times were to her.

Knowing that her cancer prognosis was not good, I approached Msgr. Paul Hudock when he was pastor at St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Wheeling and asked him if he could fully initiate my mother-in-law into the Church since she was in "Danger of Death". It was an amazing experience to be there as she received her sacraments of initiation: Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist. During the Mass, she cried and afterward kept saying, "I am so happy! I am so happy! I feel so good."

Lately when she comes to our house so that my husband can take her to medical appointments, she arrives sluggish and in pain. Nevertheless, she wants me to take her to Mass. After evening Mass, she cries again and says, "I feel so good!" The next morning, she wakes up with a burst of energy



Courtesy Photo
The daughters of Bernadette McMasters Kime, 3-year-old Elena (left) and 5-year-old Erica, help their grandma blow out her birthday candles.

and a smile on her face. She is the first one up, helps me get the kids ready for school, and eats a large breakfast. It is amazing to see the transformation in her, all because of the Eucharist. These are truly Eucharistic miracles.

While her body is weak, her faith in God is keeping her strong. Watching a family member suffer physical pain is heartbreaking, however, watching the Lord work miracles in their lives can also be a blessing.








Let Us Pray,
USE ME GOD,
SHOW ME HOW TO GIVE GENEROUSLY,
PRAY PURPOSEFULLY, AND SERVE JOYFULLY
FOR A PURPOSE GREATER THAN MYSELF.
Amen.








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Pope Benedict: Eight Years as Pope Capped Long Ministry as Teacher of Faith

By **Cindy Wooden**

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Retired Pope Benedict XVI, who had an impressive record as a teacher and defender of the basics of Catholic faith, is likely to go down in history books as the first pope in almost 600 years to resign.

He died Dec. 31 at the age of 95, nearly 10 years after leaving the papacy to retire to what he said would be a life of prayer and study.

Pope Francis celebrated his predecessor's funeral Jan. 5 in St. Peter's Square (See story on Page 7). Matteo Bruni, director of the Vatican press office, said the funeral rites would be simple in keeping with the wishes of the late pope.

As the retired pope neared death, he was given the anointing of the sick Dec. 28 in his residence, Bruni said.

His body was to lie in St. Peter's Basilica beginning Jan. 2 so that people could pay their respects and offer their prayers, he said.

Immediately after the pope died at 9:34 a.m., Bruni said, his personal secretary, Archbishop Georg Gänswein, phoned Pope Francis, who went immediately to the late pope's bedside to pray and to offer condolences to those who had cared for him in the last years of his life.

Archbishop Gänswein told Vatican News Jan. 1 that Pope Benedict's last words were, "Lord, I love you."

It was about 3 a.m. the day he died, the archbishop said. "In a faint voice, but in a clearly discernable way, he said in Italian, 'Lord, I love you!' I was not there at the time, but the nurse told me shortly afterward. These were his last comprehensible words, because afterward he was no longer able to express himself."

A close collaborator of St. John Paul II and the theological expert behind many of his major teachings and gestures, Pope Benedict came to the papacy after 24 years heading the doctrinal congregation's work of safeguarding Catholic teaching on faith and morals, correcting the work of some Catholic theologians and ensuring the theological solidity of the documents issued by other Vatican offices.

As pope, he continued writing as a theologian, but also made historically important gestures to Catholics who had difficulty accepting all of the teachings of the Second Vatican Council, particularly about the liturgy. In 2007, he widened permission to use the "extraordinary" or pre-Vatican II form of the Mass and, a short time later, extended a hand to the traditionalist Society of St. Pius X. Besides lifting the excommunications of four of the society's bishops who were ordained illicitly in 1988, he launched a long and intense dialogue with the group. In the



Pope Benedict XVI smiles as he bids the crowd farewell after celebrating Mass at Nationals Park in Washington April 17, 2008. Pope Benedict died Dec. 31, 2022, at the age of 95 in his residence at the Vatican.

CNS Photo/Nancy Wiehceh

end, though, the talks broke down.

His papacy, which began when he was 78, was extremely busy for a man who already had a pacemaker and who had wanted to retire to study, write and pray when he turned 75. He used virtually every medium at his disposal — books and Twitter, sermons and encyclicals — to catechize the faithful on the foundational beliefs and practices of Christianity, ranging from the sermons of St. Augustine to the sign of the cross.

Pope Benedict was the first pope to meet with victims of clerical sexual abuse. He clarified church laws to expedite cases and mandated that bishops' conferences put in place stringent norms against abuse.

Although he did not expect to travel much, he ended up making 24 trips to six continents and three times presided over World Youth Day mega-gatherings: in Germany in 2005, Australia in 2008, and Spain in 2011.

On a historic visit to the United States in 2008, the pope brought his own identity into clearer focus for Americans. He set forth a moral challenge on issues ranging from economic justice to abortion. He also took church recognition of the priestly sex-abuse scandal to a new level, expressing his personal shame at what happened and personally praying with victims.

While still in his 30s, he served as an influential adviser during the Second Vatican Council, 1962-65, and as

pope, he made it a priority to correct what he saw as overly expansive interpretations of Vatican II in favor of readings that stressed the council's continuity with the church's millennial traditions.

Under his oversight, the Vatican continued to highlight the church's moral boundaries on issues such as end-of-life medical care, marriage and homosexuality. But the pope's message to society at large focused less on single issues and more on the risk of losing the basic relationship between the human being and the Creator.

Surprising those who had expected a by-the-book pontificate from a man who had spent so many years as the Vatican's chief doctrinal official, Pope Benedict emphasized that Christianity was a religion of love and not a religion of rules.

The German-born pontiff did not try to match the popularity of St. John Paul, but the millions of people who came to see him in Rome and abroad came to appreciate his smile, his frequent ad-libs and his ability to speak from the heart.

Some of Pope Benedict's most memorable statements came when he applied simple Gospel values to social issues such as the protection of human life, the environment and economics. When the global financial crisis worsened in 2008, for example, the pope insisted that financial institutions must put people before profits. He also reminded people that money and

worldly success are passing realities, saying: "Whoever builds his life on these things — on material things, on success, on appearances — is building on sand."

He consistently warned the West that unless its secularized society rediscovered religious values, it could not hope to engage in real dialogue with Muslims and members of other religious traditions.

In his encyclicals and in his books on "Jesus of Nazareth," the pope honed that message, asking readers to discover the essential connections between sacrificial love, works of charity, a dedication to the truth and the Gospel of Christ.

The retired pope looked in-depth at his papacy and resignation, his relationships with St. John Paul and Pope Francis and a host of other issues in "Last Testament," a book-length interview with journalist Peter Seewald published in 2016.

In the book, Pope Benedict insisted once again that he was not pressured by anyone or any event to resign and he did not feel he was running away from any problem. However, he acknowledged "practical governance was not my forte, and this certainly was a weakness."

Insisting "my hour had passed, and I had given all I could," Pope Benedict said he never regretted resigning, but he did regret hurting friends and faithful who were "really distressed and felt forsaken" by his stepping down.

Less than a month after resigning, he already looked frailer and walked with noticeably more difficulty than he did when he left office. The video images released by the Vatican March 23, 2013, when his successor, Pope Francis, visited him at Castel Gandolfo underscored the "diminishing energy" Pope Benedict had said led to his resignation.

Pope Benedict moved to the papal summer villa at Castel Gandolfo Feb. 28, 2013, the day his resignation took effect. He remained at the villa south of Rome for two months — a period that included the conclave that elected Pope Francis as his successor and the first month of the new pope's pontificate. The retired pope moved back to the Vatican May 2, 2013, living in a monastery remodeled as a residence for him, his secretary and the consecrated women who cared for his household before and after his resignation.

On his only post-retirement trip outside of Italy, he flew to Germany in June 2020 for a five-day visit with his ailing 96-year-old brother.

Answering questions from reporters on a flight back from Brazil in **See "Ministry" on Page 6**

Ministry...

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July 2013, Pope Francis spoke with admiration of the retired pope's humility, intelligence and prayerfulness. The unusual situation of having a pope and a retired pope both living at the Vatican was working out very well, Pope Francis said. Having the retired pope nearby to consult with, or ask questions of, Pope Francis said, was "like having a grandfather at home — a very wise grandfather." By the time Pope Benedict had been retired for a year, his daily routine was set. Archbishop Georg Gänswein, his personal secretary, said his days began with Mass, morning prayer and breakfast. Although mostly hidden from public view, he was not cloistered, but continued welcoming old friends and colleagues, engaging in dialogue or offering spiritual counsel. He spent hours reading and dealing with correspondence before a 4 p.m. stroll in the garden and recitation of the rosary.

In the early days of his retirement, to the delight and surprise of pilgrims and cardinals, Pope Benedict appeared at major events with Pope Francis, including the opening of the Holy Door of St. Peter's Basilica Dec. 8, 2015.

At a June 2016 celebration in the Apostolic Palace, where Pope Benedict once lived and worked, Pope Francis, top officials of the Roman Curia and a few friends gathered with him to mark the 65th anniversary of the retired pontiff's priestly ordination.

Pope Francis told Pope Benedict that with him in residence, the monastery in the Vatican Gardens "emanates tranquility, peace, strength, faithfulness, maturity, faith, dedication and loyalty, which does so much good for me and gives strength to me and to the whole church."

Pope Benedict replied to Pope Francis, "More than the beauty found in the Vatican Gardens, your goodness is the place where I live; I feel protected."

He prayed that Pope Francis would continue to "lead us all on this path of divine mercy that shows the path of Jesus, to Jesus and to God."

Mercy was a prominent topic in an interview Pope Benedict gave in 2015. The Catholic focus on mercy really began with St. John Paul, the retired pope told Belgian Jesuit Father Jacques Servais in the written interview, which was not released until March 2016.

From his experience as a youth during World War II and his ministry under communism in Poland, St. John Paul "affirmed that mercy is the only true and ultimately effective reaction against the power of evil. Only where there is mercy does cruelty end, only there do evil and violence stop," said Pope Benedict, who worked closely with the Polish pope for decades.

"Pope Francis," he said, "is in complete agreement with this line. His pastoral practice is expressed precisely



CNS Photo/Vatican Media

Pope Francis greets retired Pope Benedict XVI at the retired pontiff's Vatican residence Dec. 23, 2013.

in the fact that he speaks continuously of God's mercy."

Pope Benedict had said he planned to live a "hidden life" in retirement — and to a large extent he did. But when he did make contributions to public discussions, they became headline news. In April 2019, for instance, what he described as "notes" on the clerical sexual abuse crisis were published; and, in January 2020, an essay he wrote on priestly celibacy was published in a book by Cardinal Robert Sarah, prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments.

In the text on abuse, which the retired pope said was motivated by the February 2019 Vatican summit on the crisis, Pope Benedict traced the abuse crisis to a loss of certainty about faith and morals, especially beginning in the late 1960s. To address the crisis, he wrote, "what is required first and foremost is the renewal of the faith in the reality of Jesus Christ given to us in the Blessed Sacrament."

The 2020 text on celibacy became the center of a media storm, not only because of its content, but also because Catholics were awaiting Pope Francis' official response to the Synod of Bishops for the Amazon and suggestions made there that in remote areas the church could consider ordaining some married men to take the sacraments to Catholics who usually go months without.

Since marriage and priesthood both demand the total devotion and self-giving of a man to his vocation, "it does not seem possible to realize both vocations simultaneously," Pope Benedict wrote in his essay.

The retired pope's contribution to the discussion became even more controversial when Archbishop Gänswein informed media and the original publisher that while Pope Benedict contributed an essay to Cardinal Sarah's book, he did not want to be listed as co-author of the volume.

As inevitable as his election

seemed after St. John Paul died in 2005, Pope Benedict's path to the papacy was long and indirect.

Joseph Ratzinger was born April 16, 1927, in the Bavarian town of Marktl am Inn, the third and youngest child of a police officer, Joseph Sr., and his wife, Maria. Young Joseph joined his brother, Georg, at a minor seminary in 1939.

Like other young students in Germany at the time, he was automatically enrolled in the Hitler Youth program, but soon stopped going to meetings. During World War II, he was conscripted into the army, and in the spring of 1945, he deserted his unit and returned home, spending a few months in an Allied prisoner-of-war camp. He returned to the seminary late in 1945 and was ordained six years later, along with his brother.

In a meeting with young people in 2006, the pope said witnessing the brutality of the Nazi regime helped persuade him to become a priest. But he also had to overcome some doubts, he said. For one thing, he asked himself whether he "could faithfully live celibacy" his entire life. He also recognized that his real leanings were toward theology and wondered whether he had the qualities of a good pastor and the ability "to be simple with the simple people."

After a short stint as a parish priest, the future pope began a teaching career and built a reputation as one of the church's foremost theologians. At Vatican II, he made important contributions as a theological expert and embraced the council's early work. But he began to have misgivings about an emerging anti-Roman bias, the idea of a "church from below" run on a parliamentary model, and the direction of theological research in the church — criticism that would become even sharper in later years.

In a 2005 speech that served as a kind of manifesto for his young papacy, Pope Benedict rejected what he

called a "hermeneutic of discontinuity and rupture" in interpreting Vatican II as a radical break with the past. The pope called instead for reading the council through a "hermeneutic of reform" in continuity with Catholic tradition.

In 1977, St. Paul VI named him archbishop of Munich and Freising and, four years later, Pope John Paul called him to head the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, where he wielded great influence on issues such as liberation theology, dissent from church teachings and pressure for women's ordination. Serving in this role for nearly a quarter century, then-Cardinal Ratzinger earned a reputation in some quarters as a sort of grand inquisitor, seeking to stamp out independent thinking, an image belied by his passion for debate with thinkers inside and outside the church.

As the newly elected pope in 2005, he explained that he took the name Benedict to evoke the memory of Pope Benedict XV, a "courageous prophet of peace" during World War I, and said he wanted to place his ministry at the service of reconciliation and harmony among peoples.

Like his namesake and his predecessors, he was untiring in his appeals for an end to violence in world trouble spots and for dialogue as the only true and lasting solution to conflict. Another key to building a better world, he said repeatedly, is to respect the right of each person to seek and to worship God.

A direct appeal to China's communist government to respect the religious freedom of its people was a central part of Pope Benedict's 2007 Letter to Chinese Catholics. The letter also pleaded with the faithful on the mainland to work toward reconciliation between communities that had accepted some government control in order to minister openly and those that continued to practice their faith more clandestinely.

In the aftermath of the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks in the United States and amid reports of rising religious-inspired violence in various parts of the world, Pope Benedict also repeatedly and clearly condemned all violence committed in the name of God.

One of the biggest tests of his papacy came after a lecture at Germany's University of Regensburg, in 2006, when he quoted a Christian medieval emperor who said the prophet Muhammad had brought "things only evil and inhuman, such as his command to spread by the sword the faith he preached."

Protests in the Muslim world followed, and Pope Benedict apologized that his words had offended Muslims, distancing himself from the text he had quoted. Soon after, he accepted the invitation of an international group of Muslim scholars and leaders to launch a new dialogue initiative, "The Common Word," looking at teachings that Christians and Muslims share.

At Funeral, Pope Remembers Benedict's 'Wisdom, Tenderness, Devotion'



CNS Photo/Vatican Media

Cardinals and bishops attend the funeral Mass of Pope Benedict XVI in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican Jan. 5.



CNS Photo/Paul Haring

Pope Francis pauses in front of the casket of Pope Benedict XVI at the conclusion of his funeral Mass in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican Jan. 5.

By Carol Glatz

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope Benedict XVI “spread and testified to” the Gospel his entire life, Pope Francis told tens of thousands of people gathered Jan. 5 for his predecessor’s funeral Mass.

“Like the women at the tomb, we too have come with the fragrance of gratitude and the balm of hope, in order to show him once more the love that is undying. We want to do this with the same wisdom, tenderness and devotion that he bestowed upon us over the years,” Pope Francis said in his homily.

The Mass in St. Peter’s Square was the first time in more than 200 years that a pope celebrated the funeral of his predecessor. Pope Pius VII had celebrated the funeral of Pius VI in 1802 when his remains were returned to Rome after he died in exile in France in 1799.

Pope Benedict, who had retired in 2013, had requested his funeral be simple; the only heads of state invited to lead delegations were those of Italy and his native Germany.

However, many dignitaries — including Queen Sofia of Spain and King Philippe of Belgium — and presidents and government ministers representing more than a dozen nations were in attendance, as were most of the ambassadors to the Holy See.

Members of the College of Cardinals sat on one side of the casket, while, on the other side, sat special guests, including the late pope’s closest collaborators and representatives of the Orthodox, Oriental Orthodox, Anglican, Protestant and U.S. evangelical communities. Jewish and Muslim organizations also sent delegations.

Pope Francis presided over the Mass and Cardinal Giovanni Battista Re, dean of the College of Cardinals, was the main celebrant at the altar. Some 120 cardinals, another 400 bishops and 3,700 priests concelebrated. More than 1,000 journalists, photographers and camera operators from around the world were accredited to cover the funeral in St. Peter’s Square.

An estimated 50,000 people filled the square for the Mass, and a number of visitors told Catholic News Service that banners and flags were being confiscated by security upon entrance. Of the few flags and banners that did make it past security was a white cloth with “Santo Subito” (“Sainthood Now”) written

in red and a “Thank you, Pope Benedict” written in light blue in German.

Just as Pope Benedict dedicated his pontificate to directing the faithful’s focus to the person of Christ, Pope Francis dedicated his homily to Christ’s loving devotion and suffering witness as the “invitation and the program of life that he quietly inspires in us,” rather than on a summary of his predecessor’s life.

Pope Francis spoke of Jesus’ grateful, prayerful and sustained devotion to God’s will and how Jesus’ final words on the cross, “Father, into your hands I commend my spirit,” summed up his entire life, “a ceaseless self-entrustment into the hands of his Father.”

“His were hands of forgiveness and compassion, healing and mercy, anointing and blessing, which led him also to entrust himself into the hands of his brothers and sisters,” he said.

“Father into your hands I commend my spirit,” the pope said, is the plan for life that Jesus quietly invites and inspires people to follow. However, he said, the path requires sustained and prayerful devotion that is “silently shaped and refined amid the challenges and resistance that every pastor must face in trusting obedience to the Lord’s command to feed his flock.”

“Like the Master, a shepherd bears the burden of interceding and the strain of anointing his people, especially in situations where goodness must struggle to prevail and the dignity of our brothers and sisters is threatened,” said the pope.

“The Lord quietly bestows the spirit of meekness that is ready to understand, accept, hope and risk, notwithstanding any misunderstandings that might result. It is the source of an unseen and elusive fruitfulness, born of his knowing the One in whom he has placed his trust,” he said.

“Feeding means loving, and loving also means being ready to suffer. Loving means giving the sheep what is truly good, the nourishment of God’s truth, of God’s word, the nourishment of his presence,” Pope Francis said, quoting his predecessor’s homily marking the start of his pontificate April 24, 2005.

“Holding fast to the Lord’s last words and to the witness of his entire life, we too, as an ecclesial community, want to follow in his steps and to commend our brother into the hands of the Father,” he said of

Pope Benedict. “May those merciful hands find his lamp alight with the oil of the Gospel that he spread and testified to for his entire life.”

“God’s faithful people, gathered here, now accompany and entrust to him the life of the one who was their pastor,” the pope said. “Together, we want to say, ‘Father, into your hands we commend his spirit.’”

“Benedict, faithful friend of the Bridegroom, may your joy be complete as you hear his voice, now and forever!” he concluded, as the crowd prayed in silence.

Among the people in the crowd was Georg Bruckmaier who traveled nearly 10 hours by car to come to the funeral from his home in Bavaria, not far away from where the late pope was born. Wearing a Bavarian flag around his back, he told CNS, “There are a lot of Bavarians here today, I’ve seen people I know from university. I wanted to be here for the atmosphere.”

“People felt very close to him, because he is a Bavarian, so this is a really big event to be here,” Bruckmaier said, adding that being able to pay his last respects before the pope’s remains in St. Peter’s Basilica, “is a different thing than seeing it on television. It’s something I won’t forget in my whole life.”

Fiona-Louise Devlin told CNS she and her companions were wearing scarves from the late pope’s visit to Scotland in 2010. “He’s the pope of our generation. Like, how so many people say that John Paul II was their pope, he was mine. I’ve traveled around the world to go to celebrations that he’s been a part of, so I wanted to be here for this,” she said.

As the day began, the thick morning fog obscuring the cupola slowly began to lift as 12 laymen emerged from the basilica carrying the pope’s casket. The crowd applauded as the cypress casket was brought into the square and placed before the altar. The pope’s master of liturgical ceremonies, Msgr. Diego Giovanni Ravelli, and Archbishop Georg Gänswein, the late pope’s longtime personal secretary, together placed an opened Book of the Gospels on the casket. The simple casket was decorated with his coat of arms as archbishop of Munich and Freising, Germany, which depicts a shell, a Moor and a bear loaded with a pack on his back.

See “Funeral” on Page 8

Novena in Memory of Pope Benedict XVI

The entire Church mourns the death of our Emeritus Holy Father, Benedict XVI. In cathedrals, basilicas, parish churches, shrines, and chapels the Holy Eucharist will be offered for the repose of his soul. Communities and individuals will ask God to bestow his infinite mercy on the man who served the Church as Bishop of Rome.

A novena is available on the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' website (<https://www.usccb.org>) to help pray for the Pope Emeritus during this time. The daily novena – lasting from his funeral on Thursday, January 5 through Friday, January 13 – consists of a short reading from Scripture or some other ecclesiastical text and some brief prayers, including orations drawn from the Roman Missal and the Order of Christian Funerals.

Funeral...

Cont'd from Page 7

The Bible readings at the Mass were in Spanish, English and Italian, and the prayers of the faithful at the Mass were recited in German, French, Arabic, Portuguese and Italian.

The prayers included petitions for "Pope Emeritus Benedict, who has fallen asleep in the Lord: may the eternal Shepherd receive him into his kingdom of light and peace," followed by a prayer "for our Holy Father, Pope Francis, and for all the pastors of the church: may they proclaim fearlessly, in word and deed, Christ's victory over evil and death."

The other prayers were for justice and peace in the world, for those suffering from poverty and other forms of need, and for those gathered at the funeral. Communion was followed by the "final commendation and farewell," asking that "Pope Emeritus Benedict" be delivered from death and "may sing God's praises in the heavenly Jerusalem."

Pope Francis prayed that God have mercy on his predecessor, who was "a fearless preacher of your word and a faithful minister of the divine mysteries." While the funeral was based on the model of a papal funeral, two key elements normally part of a papal funeral following the farewell prayer were missing: there were no prayers offered by representatives of the Diocese of Rome and of the Eastern Catholic churches, since those prayers are specific to the death of a reigning pope, who is bishop of the Diocese of Rome and is in communion

with the leaders of the Eastern-rite churches.

A bell tolled solemnly and the assembly applauded for several minutes — with some chanting "Benedetto" — as the pallbearers carried the casket toward St. Peter's Basilica.

Pope Francis blessed the casket and laid his right hand on it in prayer, then bowed slightly in reverence before it was taken inside for a private burial in the grotto of St. Peter's Basilica, in the same tomb that held the remains of St. Pope John Paul II before his beatification.

After the funeral Mass, the pope's casket was taken to the chapel in the crypt of St. Peter's Basilica where he was to be buried. Although the burial was private, images supplied by Vatican Media showed Cardinal Re leading prayers and blessing the remains during the burial rite attended by a small number of senior cardinals, the retired pope's closest aides and others. The cypress casket was wrapped with red ribbon, which was affixed to the wood with red wax seals, then placed inside a zinc casket soldered shut and put inside a larger casket made of oak. The tops of both the zinc and oak caskets were decorated with a simple cross, a bronze plaque with the pope's name and dates of birth, papacy and death, and his papal coat of arms.

His tomb is located between the only two women buried in the grotto under the basilica: the 15th-century Queen Charlotte of Cyprus and the 17th-century Queen Christina of Sweden.

(Contributing to this story was Justin McLellan at the Vatican.)

HOPE SCHOLARSHIP WEST VIRGINIA



Community Town Hall with Director of Hope Scholarship, Adam Schuemake

Wednesday, January 18th

6:00-7:30pm

Parkersburg Catholic High School

3201 Fairview Ave,
Parkersburg, WV 26104

Mike DeRose

Principal

304-485-6341

mderose@pchs1.com

Join the conversation with Parkersburg Catholic Schools as we host our first WV Hope Scholarship Town Hall/ parent Q&A session, led by the WV Director of Hope Scholarship, Adam Schuemake.

The Hope Scholarship is a WV education savings account program that gives parents an opportunity to build an individual learning experience that is tailored to their child's needs. The scholarship allows K-12 students to receive financial assistance that can be used for tuition, fees and other educational costs.**

The Town Hall will be hosted at the Parkersburg Catholic High School Media Center. All community members are invited to attend.

**Parkersburg Catholic is committed to working with families to ensure that private education is a viable financial option for all who are interested. If you have questions or concerns regarding tuition costs at PCS, please attend this meeting or contact the school directly so we can identify methods of tuition assistance to meet your needs.

Note: this scholarship is not run, managed, or determined by the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston or the Department of Catholic Schools in the Diocese.

Please contact Mike DeRose, Principal for PCS to RSVP or address any questions leading up to the event.

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Diocese's Social Ministries Director Encourages All to Join in March for Life in Nation's Capital

By Colleen Rowan

A historic March for Life will be held in Washington, D.C., on Jan. 20.

"For the first time, in the history of the March for Life, we celebrate the overturning of *Roe v. Wade* which eliminates the 'right' to abort an unborn child and returns the power to each state and their elected officials," said Kathy Barton, director of Social Ministries for the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston.

This year also marks the 50th March for Life in the nation's capital and bears the theme "Next Steps: Marching in a Post-Roe America."

"I encourage defenders of life to join with those who have marched before us for a half of a century as we celebrate our progress while recognizing the work that remains to

defend the unborn," Barton said.

At the same time she is encouraging participation in the march, Barton is stressing the need to also focus energy and efforts working toward solutions for mothers and their children.

"Now is the time to truly support life!" she said.

The reason to continue the March for Life post-Roe is stated on the march's website at <https://marchforlife.org>.

"Even with the wonderful blessing of *Roe v. Wade* being overturned, which allows more freedom at the state level to enact pro-life laws, the necessary work to build a culture of life in the United States of America is not finished," the site states. "Rather, it is focused differently. Sadly, the number of abortions annually is still well over 900,000 each year, and that number

is expected to decrease only by roughly 200,000 each year in a post-Roe America.

"Many national legislative battles loom, including even keeping longstanding Hyde protections, which limit government funding for abortion on annual appropriation bills," the site states. "The Hyde Amendment has saved over 2 million lives and is arguably the most impactful pro-life policy in our nation's history, but now cannot be taken for granted. Last, our most important work is changing hearts and minds. The goal of the national March for Life is to not only change laws at the state and federal level, but to change the culture to ultimately make abortion unthinkable."

The site states that the march will continue every January at the national level until a culture of life

is restored in the U.S.

The schedule is as follows: Wednesday, Jan. 18: March for Life Expo, 6-8 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 19: March for Life Expo, 9 a.m.-8 p.m.; Capitol Hill 101, 11 a.m.-noon. Friday, Jan. 20, March for Life Expo, 9-11 a.m. & 4-7 p.m. Pre-Rally Concert, 11 a.m. - noon. March for Life Rally, noon-1 p.m. March for Life, 1-4 p.m.

For information on bus transportation from West Virginia to the March for Life and information on Walking with Moms (a nationwide, pastoral effort led by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops to encourage increased outreach to pregnant and parenting mothers in need), contact Barton by calling (304) 233-0880, ext. 289, or by e-mail to kbarton@dwc.org.

More information can be found by visiting <https://marchforlife.org>.

Sisters of Life and Knights of Columbus to Host Life Fest, an All-New Morning Rally at National March for Life

In response to an increased need to support vulnerable women and to form hearts in receiving every human life as a gift, the Sisters of Life and the Knights of Columbus announced an all-new morning rally, Life Fest, to be held in conjunction with the 2023 National March for Life in Washington, D.C. Life Fest will be held on Jan. 20 at the 4,200-seat Entertainment & Sports Arena in Washington. Doors will open at 7 a.m. Eastern Time. Life Fest will feature dynamic speakers such as Sister Bethany Madonna, SV; music; Holy Mass; and a time of Eucharistic adoration.

"The 2023 National March for Life is one of the most crucial in the history of the pro-life movement. In the wake of the recent Dobbs decision, we see a profound opportunity to build the culture of life in a new way," Sister Maris Stella, SV, said. "We want to serve the church in her most urgent need—that of the cause of human life, sharing the good news of God's plan for life and love. So, let's return to the heart of the matter. Let's renew our commitment to love. Let's be agents of healing in a broken world."

"50 years ago, the Knights of Columbus helped launch

the National March for Life. Tens of thousands of Knights have marched, year after year, and it's become the largest annual human rights demonstration in the world," said Patrick Kelly, Supreme Knight of the Knights of Columbus. "The end of *Roe* is a crucial milestone, but we should not mistake the ruling as the end of abortion. The fight to protect life will now evolve at the state level but a united stand before national lawmakers is still essential. We're delighted to partner with the Sisters of Life to inspire the next generation, and together, we'll push forward in the states and as a nation, with all the courage and compassion we can summon."

This event hopes to inspire and educate a new generation on the next steps for a new spirituality of love and life, one foundational to building a culture of life in the post-Dobbs era. The Sisters and Knights aim to reignite the faithful in an appreciation of the gift of their own lives, and love and empathy for women who are unexpectedly pregnant and for women and men who have suffered after abortion. They also hope to encourage the attendees to continue to participate in the

March for Life as a celebration for life.

"Why do we rally, and why do we march?" said Sister Marie Veritas, SV. "Because abortion is more than a political issue, or a legal term, or a medical procedure. Abortion has a face and a name. We march because we stand with women who are pregnant and in need. We march because no woman who has experienced abortion is left unseen by God's love and mercy. We march because God wants to heal broken hearts and lives. We march because your life, and every life, is a gift."

For more information about Life Fest, or to register, visit: lifefest2023.com.

The Sisters of Life is a Catholic religious community of women founded in New York in 1991 by John Cardinal O'Connor. Consecrated completely to Jesus, the Lord of Life, they commit themselves to the protection of human life and to the promotion of new life in Christ, acknowledging the sacredness of every person, and sharing the good news of God's abundant mercy. In this way, they seek to help reveal to each person their own innate goodness, the particular love God has for them, and the call to a life of abundant truth, joy, and

hope. Immersed in Eucharistic prayer within a vibrant community life, their missions include caring for vulnerable pregnant women and their unborn children, inviting those wounded by abortion into the healing mercy of

Jesus, fostering a culture of life through evangelization, retreat works, spiritual accompaniment of college students, and upholding the beauty of marriage and family life. For more information, visit sistersoflife.org.



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W.Va. Catholic Schools Celebrate Catholic Schools Week Jan. 29 to Feb. 4

By Joyce Bibey

Catholic Schools in West Virginia are finalizing plans to celebrate National Catholic Schools Week from Jan. 29-Feb. 4

Principals, staff, and volunteers in the 24 Catholic schools - 18 grade schools and six high schools - are working together to showcase our exceptional schools, said Mary Ann Deschaine, Ed.S., Superintendent of W.Va. Catholic Schools.

"Our schools provide an environment that is an extension of our family," she said. "We are committed to providing a quality education that is unapologetically Catholic in nature. Lessons in Catholic faith are integrated into all subject areas and activities. With a steadfast focus on our faith, we trust God, through his son Jesus Christ, will continue to guide us to help our children reach their full potential."

While academic excellence is a priority proven with proficiency assessments remaining above national and state averages (according to the U.S. Department of Education National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) and the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), nurturing the whole child

for college and career readiness in a Christ-centered environment is our mission.

"Our priority is our students, our privilege is supporting our families, and our commitment is to continually improve our schools as we look to the future," Deschaine said. "Through individual and critical thinking; strong self-esteem; empathy; citizenship; and a sound moral foundation all in a Christ-centered environment, each of our 24 schools prepare our students to be the best version of themselves, so they can confidently share their God-given gifts and talents."

All 24 schools across the state will host a variety of activities for their students and the community.

Catholic Schools Week is a great time to schedule a tour or shadow day at the school if you are considering sending your child, grandchild, or loved one. Contact your local school to schedule, and ask them about their celebrations you can be a part of, such as athletic events, academic fairs, choral concerts, community service projects, school Mass, and more.

For more information contact your local Catholic school or find a listing at <https://wvcatholicschools.org>.



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Little Shepherds' Relics and Our Lady of Fatima Pilgrim Statue at St. Anthony's in Follansbee



Courtesy Photos

St. Anthony Parish in Follansbee hosted relics of the little shepherds of Fatima, Portugal — Saints Jacinta and Francisco Marto, and the pilgrim statue of Our Lady of Fatima Dec. 8-11. The four-day visit included Mass every day, quiet prayer, praying of the rosary and chaplet, veneration of relics, a Day of Healing, Eucharistic adoration, a Healing Mass, a Marian Day, a Mass in honor of Our Lady, opportunity for confession, a youth presentation, and farewell procession through the community.

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A 'Little Piece' of History

Bell from Former St. Francis Borgia Church in Anmoore has Permanent Home at All Saints in Bridgeport



Courtesy Photo

The bell from their former mission church and mother church, St. Francis Borgia in Anmoore, previously called Graselli, has been placed on the grounds of All Saints Parish in Bridgeport at the corner of Main Street and 3rd Street. The installation was made possible through the generosity of a parishioner. The parish is grateful to Father Walter Jagela, pastor, for his vision in helping maintain this "little piece" of history of All Saints, by way of this project. A blessing ceremony is being planned for the near future. All Saints recently just completed a year-long jubilee celebration to commemorate its 75 years as a parish.



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Testamento espiritual del Papa Benedicto: 'Manténganse firmes en la fe'

By **Cindy Wooden**

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — El mensaje final del Papa Retirado Benedicto XVI a los católicos de todo el mundo fue: "¡Manténganse firmes en la fe! ¡No se dejen confundir!"

A menos de 10 horas de informar al mundo que el papa de 95 años había muerto el 31 de diciembre, la oficina de prensa del Vaticano publicó su testamento espiritual, una declaración de fe y acción de gracias.

A diferencia del testamento espiritual de San Juan Pablo II, el del Papa Benedicto no incluyó instrucciones para su funeral o entierro y no mencionó lo que debería suceder con sus pertenencias.

"A todos aquellos a quienes he agraviado de alguna manera, les pido perdón de corazón", escribió el Papa Benedicto.

Escrito en alemán y con fecha del 29 de agosto de 2006 -- en el segundo año de su pontificado de casi ocho años -- el Papa Benedicto XVI escribió con gran afecto de sus padres, su hermana y su hermano, la belleza de Baviera y su fe en Dios.

"Si en esta última hora de mi vida miro hacia atrás, a las décadas que he vivido, primero veo cuántas razones tengo para dar gracias", es-

cribió en el documento cuando tenía 79 años.

"Ante todo, agradezco a Dios mismo, dador de todo bien, que me dio la vida y me guió en diversos momentos de confusión, siempre me levantó cuando empezaba a resbalar y siempre me devolvió la luz de su semblante," dijo. "En retrospectiva, veo y comprendo que incluso los tramos oscuros y agotadores de este camino fueron para mi salvación y que fue en ellos donde Él me guió bien".

Nacido en 1927, Joseph Ratzinger se crió en una Alemania que luchaba por recuperarse de la Primera Guerra Mundial; Adolf Hitler llegó al poder cuando el futuro papa tenía solo 7 años.

En su testamento, agradeció a sus padres, "quienes me dieron la vida en una época difícil y quienes, a costa de grandes sacrificios, con su amor me prepararon un magnífico hogar que, como una luz clara, ilumina mis días hasta el día de hoy".

"La clara fe de mi padre nos enseñó a nosotros los hijos a creer, y como señal siempre se ha mantenido firme en medio de todos mis logros académicos", dijo. "La piedad sincera y la gran bondad de mi madre son un legado por el que no

puedo agradecerle lo suficiente".

El Papa Benedicto le dio gracias a Dios por los muchos amigos, tanto hombres como mujeres, que había tenido a su lado, y por sus maestros y alumnos, con muchos de los cuales siguió reuniéndose en los últimos años de su vida.

Un papa conocido por su preocupación por el medio ambiente, él agradeció a Dios por la belleza de su tierra natal bávara, "en la que siempre he visto brillar el esplendor del Creador mismo".

"Rezo para que nuestra tierra siga siendo una tierra de fe", escribió antes de suplicar a sus compatriotas alemanes que no permitan que nada los aleje de la fe.

"Y, finalmente", escribió, "doy gracias a Dios por toda la belleza que experimenté en cada etapa de mi recorrido, especialmente en Roma y en Italia, que se ha convertido en mi segunda patria".

Dirigiéndose a toda la Iglesia, el Papa Benedicto instó a los católicos a aferrarse a su fe y no permitir que la ciencia o la investigación sacudan los cimientos de su creencia.

"A menudo parece como si la ciencia, las ciencias naturales por un lado y la investigación histórica (especialmente la exégesis de la Sagrada Escritura) por el otro, fuera

capaz de ofrecer resultados irrefutables en desacuerdo con la fe católica", dijo.

Pero aseguró a quienes leyeron el documento que a lo largo de su vida había visto a la ciencia ofrecer "aparentes certezas contra la fe" para luego verlas desvanecerse, "demostrando no ser ciencia, sino de interpretaciones filosóficas que sólo parecen pertenecer a la ciencia".

Al mismo tiempo, dijo, "es en diálogo con las ciencias naturales que también la fe ha aprendido a comprender mejor el límite del alcance de sus pretensiones y, por tanto, su especificidad".

En 60 años de estudio y observación teológica, dijo, había visto colapsar tesis "inamovibles", incluidas las ofrecidas por la "generación marxista" de teólogos.

"Vuelve a surgir lo razonable de la fe y está emergiendo de nuevo", escribió. "Jesucristo es verdaderamente el camino, la verdad y la vida, y la Iglesia, con todas sus insuficiencias, es verdaderamente su cuerpo".

Por último, el Papa Benedicto escribió: "Pido humildemente: oren por mí, para que el Señor, a pesar de todos mis pecados e insuficiencias, me reciba en la morada eterna".

Para denunciar presuntos casos de abuso sexual de niños:

La Diócesis de Wheeling-Charleston alienta a informar ante las autoridades civiles ante todo si se ha cometido un delito. También alentamos a utilizar www.reportbishopabuse.org para hacer un informe sobre cualquier obispo en los EE. UU. Si tiene motivos para creer que un obispo ha cometido una conducta sexual inapropiada, comuníquese con las autoridades civiles de la jurisdicción correspondiente y visite www.reportbishopabuse.org.

Para informar a las autoridades civiles: comuníquese con la policía local; los números varían según su ubicación. Si cree que alguien está en peligro inmediato, llame al 911. Para informar confidencialmente cualquier incidencia de sospecha de abuso o negligencia infantil, incluido el abuso sexual, comuníquese con la Oficina de Servicios de Protección Infantil de Niños y Familias de West Virginia llamando a la línea directa de abuso infantil al 800.352.6513. Puede informar anonimamente a esta línea directa si lo prefiere.

Para informar a las autoridades diocesanas: La diócesis alienta a informar a las autoridades civiles apropiadas, ante todo, si se ha cometido un delito. La diócesis también alienta a informar a las autoridades eclesiales apropiadas. Para reportar casos sospechosos de abuso sexual de niños por parte del personal de la Diócesis de Wheeling-Charleston a la Diócesis, comuníquese con uno de los siguientes designados al 1.888.434.6237 o 304.233.0880: Sr. Bryan Minor, ext. 263; Sr. Tim Bishop, ext. 353; o Muy Reverendo Dennis Schuelkens, Jr., V.E., ext. 270. También puede llamar a la Oficina de Ambiente Seguro de la Diócesis al 304.230.1504. También puede lla-

mar a la línea directa de abuso sexual de la Diócesis al 833.230.5656. Los formularios de queja están disponibles en línea en www.dwc.org, haga clic en "Diócesis" en la barra de menú, luego en "Oficinas", luego en "Ambiente seguro", luego "Descargar archivos y formularios". El formulario se titula "Formulario de queja para denuncias de abuso sexual de menores". El formulario se puede devolver por correo de EE. UU. A: Office of Safe Environment, Diócesis de Wheeling-Charleston, PO Box 230, Wheeling WV 26003.

Para informar al Coordinador de Asistencia a Víctimas de la Diócesis: llame a la Dra. Patricia Bailey al 304.242.6988.

Además de los métodos enumerados anteriormente para denunciar el abuso sexual, la Diócesis también se ha asociado con Navex Global para ofrecer la plataforma EthicsPoint para informar otras inquietudes adicionales, como sospecha de mala conducta financiera, profesional y personal de un sacerdote, diácono, religioso, o empleado laico de la Diócesis o cualquier parroquia o escuela católica en West Virginia. Se puede acceder a la plataforma EthicsPoint a través de www.dwc.org, en "Rendición de cuentas", luego "Informar mala conducta" o llamando al 844.723.8381. EthicsPoint es un sistema de informes de terceros que informa a las autoridades civiles cuando corresponda y a las autoridades diocesanas, y la identidad de la persona que informa esta protegida. Enlaces e información: Departamento de Salud y Recursos Humanos de WV: <https://www.wvdhhr.org/report.asp>. Policía Estatal de Virginia Occidental, Unidad de Crímenes contra Niños: 304-293-6400.

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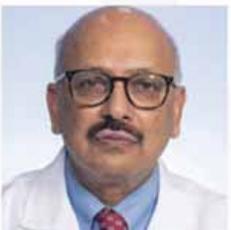
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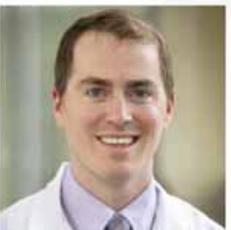
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