



THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE
of
PENSACOLA-TALLAHASSEE

Statement from Bishop William A. Wack, CSC, on the Death of Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI
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PENSACOLA (December 31, 2022) — I was saddened to learn of the death of Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI early in the morning on Saturday, December 31. I urge all our pastors, religious and faithful, to offer prayers today and during this period of prayer for the repose of his soul. May God receive him into the heavenly banquet.

Pope Benedict XVI was a true servant of Jesus Christ. As a priest and theologian, he desired only to know the Lord and to make him known. He strove in his writings to express God's love and mercy for each of us. In his first encyclical as pope, Benedict taught in line with St. John the Evangelist the simple and yet profound message, *Deus caritas est* ("God is love"). In his beautiful second encyclical, *Spe Salvi*, Benedict reminded the Church that at the center of our faith is a person, Jesus Christ, and our greatest goal is communion with him.

Benedict embodied the love, dedication, passion and faithfulness of Jesus Christ. In the coming days and years, much more will be said about him — one of the most significant theologians and pastors of our time. For now, let us all unite our prayers, both our private prayers and our celebrations of the Eucharist, for the happy repose of this servant of the Lord.

I encourage Masses to be celebrated for the repose of the soul of Benedict XVI in all of our parishes. Also appropriate are devotions such as the rosary, the Liturgy of the Hours ("For the Dead"), eucharistic adoration, silent prayer in church or other holy places, and acts of charity in memory of Pope Benedict XVI. I urge our principals and teachers to lead various prayers with our students for the happy repose of Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI.

I offer here a prayer you and your family may wish to pray in the following days:

O God, we thank you for the long life of your dedicated servant, Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI. All our hope is in you, for you so loved the world that you sent your Son, Jesus Christ, to bring us salvation. As we honor the life and service of Pope Benedict, may we strive only to know the Lord and make him known through our words and actions. Continue to guide your Church in the ways of truth, peace, and love. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, God, forever and ever. Amen.

Eternal rest grant unto him, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon him. May he rest in peace. May his soul, and the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace.