



# *The Diocese of Knoxville*

Living our Roman Catholic faith in East Tennessee

MEDIA ADVISORY  
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## Bishop Stika, Cardinal Rigali issue statements on the death of Pope Benedict XVI

KNOXVILLE--- Bishop Richard F. Stika, leader of the Catholic Church in East Tennessee, and Cardinal Justin Rigali, who now resides in Knoxville and was a member of the College of Cardinals in Rome and attended the papal conclave that elected Pope Benedict XVI in 2005, offered these statements on the death of Pope Benedict:

Bishop Richard F. Stika:

He was pope for eight years, but his impact on the Church is profound in so many ways. He was part of Vatican II, which dates to the early 1960s, and of course he was the Church's chief theologian for many years before he became pope. I met him five times, and despite the perception of him by some, he was very gentle. I wouldn't use the word strict; I would just say he was very faithful to the teachings of the Church. As pope and as pope emeritus, he was very gentle-- a firm and a kind shepherd. The Church has lost a great man. I join everyone in the Diocese of Knoxville in praying for peace, comfort, and eternal rest for Pope Benedict XVI.

Cardinal Justin Rigali:

I had the privilege of knowing Pope Benedict for many years, going back to his time as a cardinal of the Church-- Cardinal Ratzinger. I have always admired his expertise in terms of theology and understanding the Church. He was an excellent theologian and will be remembered as a theologian.

It was a privilege to participate in the election of Pope Benedict. I can remember when I went up to the pope and knelt before him to show my respect and offer to him my pledge to be faithful and obedient, the first thing that Pope Benedict said to me was, Happy Birthday, your eminence. It was my 70th birthday. Pope Benedict remembered that, and that is a memory I will always carry with me.

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