



OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

The Most Reverend Andrew H. Cozzens

P.O. Box 610 | Crookston, Minnesota | 56716

T: (218) 281-4533 | F: (218) 281-5991

TO: Clergy and Lay Faithful of the Diocese of Crookston

FROM: The Most Rev. Andrew H. Cozzens

DATE: Saturday, December 31, 2022

RE: Death of Pope Benedict XVI

Today the whole Church mourns the loss of a spiritual father whose teaching and witness inspired a generation of Catholics. Pope Benedict XVI was a man of luminous faith who offered his life and service to the Church through much suffering. He led with great humility, truth, and beautiful teaching, which matched the great saints and theologians of our tradition. He demonstrated the depth of his humility, and love for the Church through his resigning of the papacy almost 10 years ago. I will remember him as a man who knew deeply the profound yet simple love of God which he wrote about from his first encyclical letter to his last Wednesday audience.

“I should like to invite all of us to renew our firm confidence in the Lord, to entrust ourselves like children in God’s arms, certain that those arms always hold us, enabling us to press forward each day, even when the going is rough. I want everyone to feel loved by that God who gave his Son for us and who has shown us his infinite love. I want everyone to feel the joy of being a Christian. In one beautiful morning prayer, it says: ‘I adore you, my God, and I love you with all my heart. I thank you for having created me and made me a Christian...’. Yes, we are happy for the gift of faith; it is our most precious possession, which no one can take from us! Let us thank the Lord for this daily, in prayer and by a consistent Christian life. God loves us, but he also expects us to love him!” (Pope Benedict XVI on February 27, 2013 — Last Wednesday Audience).

If you have never read Pope Benedict’s writings, I encourage you to do so. You will find yourself inspired to a greater life of holiness. As he wrote in one of my favorite books of his, *The Yes of Jesus Christ*:

“It is not a headlong leap into heroism that makes someone a saint but patiently and humbly walking with Jesus, step-by-step. Holiness does not consist in adventurous achievements of virtue, but in joining him in loving.” (pp. 104 – 105)

Let us now join together as a Church and assist Pope Benedict XVI with our prayers as he assisted us with his humble leadership. We can be confident that he will also pray for us, as we seek to be faithful disciples like him.

In Christ,
+Andrew Cozzens

The Most Rev. Andrew H. Cozzens, S.T.D., D.D.
Bishop of Crookston

###