

On Aug. 29, 2006, a little more than a year into his pontificate, Pope Benedict XVI wrote his final spiritual testament.

Each Pope writes a final spiritual testament to be released only after death. The Vatican released this testament to the public shortly after the Pope Emeritus' death on Dec. 31, 2022.

The late pope thanks God, his family, his co-workers, his friends, and all who helped him in life. He asks forgiveness to those whom he hurt, and encourages his country to remain steadfast in faith.

Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI also told the faithful to "stand firm in faith," and "do not let yourselves be confused."

He then concludes with a final prayer request.

Below is the text [from Vatican News](#).

My Spiritual Testament

When, at this late hour of my life, I look back on the decades I have wandered through, I see first of all how much reason I have to give thanks. Above all, I thank God Himself, the giver of all good gifts, who has given me life and guided me through all kinds of confusion; who has always picked me up when I began to slip, who has always given me anew the light of his countenance. In retrospect, I see and understand that even the dark and arduous stretches of this path were for my salvation and that He guided me well in those very stretches.

I thank my parents, who gave me life in difficult times and prepared a wonderful home for me with their love, which shines through all my days as a bright light until today. My father's clear-sighted faith taught us brothers and sisters to believe and stood firm as a guide in the midst of all my scientific knowledge; my mother's heartfelt piety and great kindness remain a legacy for which I cannot thank her enough. My sister has served me selflessly and full of kind concern for decades; my brother has always paved the way for me with the clear-sightedness of his judgements, with his powerful determination, and with the cheerfulness of his heart; without this ever-new going ahead and going along, I would not have been able to find the right path.

I thank God from the bottom of my heart for the many friends, men and women, whom He has always placed at my side; for the co-workers at all stages of my path; for the teachers and students He has given me. I gratefully entrust them all to His goodness. And I would like to thank the Lord for my beautiful home in the Bavarian foothills of the Alps, in which I was able to see the splendour of the Creator Himself shining through time and again. I thank the people of my homeland for allowing me to experience the beauty of faith time and again. I pray that our country will remain a country of faith and I ask you, dear compatriots, not to let your faith be distracted.

Finally, I thank God for all the beauty I was able to experience during the various stages of my journey, but especially in Rome and in Italy, which has become my second home.

To all those whom I have wronged in any way, I heartily ask for forgiveness.

What I said before to my countrymen, I now say to all those in the Church who have been entrusted to my service: Stand firm in the faith! Do not let yourselves be confused!

It often seems that science — the natural sciences on the one hand and historical research (especially exegesis of Sacred Scripture) on the other — are able to offer irrefutable results at odds with the Catholic faith. I have experienced the transformations of the natural sciences since long ago and have been able to see how, on the contrary, apparent certainties against the faith have vanished, proving to be not science, but philosophical interpretations only apparently pertaining to science; just as, on the other hand, it is in dialogue with the natural sciences that faith, too, has learned to understand better the limit of the scope of its claims, and thus its specificity.

It is now sixty years that I have been accompanying the journey of Theology, particularly of the Biblical Sciences, and with the succession of different generations, I have seen theses that seemed unshakable collapse, proving to be mere hypotheses: the liberal generation (Harnack, Jülicher etc.), the existentialist generation (Bultmann etc.), the Marxist generation.

I saw and see how out of the tangle of assumptions the reasonableness of faith emerged and emerges again. Jesus Christ is truly the way, the truth and the life — and the Church, with all its insufficiencies, is truly His body.

Finally, I humbly ask: Pray for me, so that the Lord, despite all my sins and insufficiencies, welcomes me into the eternal dwellings. To all those entrusted to me, day by day, my heartfelt prayer goes out.