

TRAVEL *History & Saints*

Benedict, Christ's Envoy



2005 Pope Benedict celebrates World Youth Day Mass at the Marienfeld with an estimated 900,000 pilgrims and clerics attending on Aug. 21, 2005, near Cologne, Germany. Hundreds of thousands of Catholic pilgrims descended on the city for World Youth Day. Giuseppe Cacace/Getty Images

In 2005, the freshly minted Pope traveled to Munich, Germany, in August for World Youth Day. In May 2006, he visited Poland, the homeland of his predecessor and friend Pope John Paul II. He also went to Spain (July), Germany (September) and Turkey (November).

In May 2007, Benedict visited Brazil, principally to address the Latin American Bishops' Conference at their meeting in Aparecida. He also visited Austria in September. In July 2008, the Holy Father visited Sydney, Australia, for his second World Youth Day celebration. His September visit to France was highlighted by a pilgrimage to Lourdes, the most visited Marian shrine in the world.

The Pope showed no signs of slowing down in 2009, when his travels took him to Cameroon and Angola in March; Jordan, Israel and the Palestinian Territories in May and the Czech Republic in September. In Jerusalem, he prayed in the Church of the Holy Sepulcher and at the Wailing Wall.

The year 2010 was another momentous year for the Holy Father, highlighted by his memorable state visit in September to the United Kingdom, the first such visit to that country by a pope. The trip was sandwiched between voyages to Malta in April, Portugal in May, when he visited the Shrine of Our Lady of Fatima, Cyprus in June and Spain in November.

In 2011, Pope Benedict voyaged to Croatia and San Marino in June, attended his third World Youth Day in Madrid in August, made his third trip to Germany in September and went on to Benin in west Africa in November.

In 2012, the Pope's year was noted for his seven-day trip to Mexico and Cuba. He also visited Lebanon in September, to promulgate his post-synodal apostolic exhortation following the 2010 Synod of Bishops on the Middle East.

In the Holy Father's nearly eight-year papacy, he made 24 trips outside the Vatican, not counting his numerous trips within Italy or his historic 2008 visit to the United States. Not bad for a man who ascended the chair of Peter at the age of 78.

Here, we offer a pictorial travelogue of the well-traveled Pope.



2010 Queen Elizabeth II and Pope Benedict walk through the gardens at the Palace of Holyroodhouse on Sept. 16, 2010, in Edinburgh, Scotland. John Linton, WPA Pool/Getty Images



2011 Pope Benedict is surrounded by children as he arrives during his visit to St. Rita church in Cotonou during his pastoral visit in Benin on Nov. 19, 2011. Reuters/Alessandro Bianchi



2006 The Pope gives his speech to faculty and students of the University of Regensburg on Sept. 12, 2006, in Regensburg, Germany. Muslim leaders condemned remarks about Islam made by the Pope during his visit. Arturo Mari/L'Osservatore Romano/Vatican Pool via Getty Images



2008 His Holiness concludes his World Youth Day activities by thanking volunteers July 21, 2008, in Sydney, Australia. Dean Lewins-Pool/Getty Images



2012 The faithful wave Lebanese and Vatican City flags amidst confetti upon Benedict's arrival in his popemobile at the Baabda Presidential Palace near Beirut, Lebanon, Sept. 15, 2012. Reuters/Hasan Shaaban



2007 Benedict poses with members of a religious summit — leading Muslim, Jewish, Buddhist, Anglican, Orthodox and other Christian figures — during a pastoral visit Oct. 21, 2007, in Naples, Italy. The Pope told rabbis, ayatollahs, priests and patriarchs from around the world that religion can never be used to justify violence, issuing an appeal from the crime-ridden city of Naples for faith to be an instrument of peace. Cirio Fusco-Pool/Getty Images



2009 The Pope prays at the Western Wall, Judaism's holiest prayer site, on May 12, 2009, in Jerusalem, Israel. The Holy Father was on an eight-day tour of the Middle East, having already traveled to Jordan. Debbie Hill-Pool/Getty Images



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Tom and April Hoopes write from Atchison, Kansas, where Tom is writer in residence at Benedictine College.

Jesus, Joseph and Us

Sunday, March 17, is the Fifth Sunday of Lent (Year C).

Novena for Marriage

This year in America, marriage goes on trial during Holy Week. On March 26, the U.S. Supreme Court takes up a case that challenges the Defense of Marriage Act. That means a "Novena for the Legal Protection of Marriage" should start either on Monday, to end on the first day of the court hearings, or, maybe, on Sunday, March 17, to end on the feast of the Annunciation, March 25. In either case, the novena will include the feast days of both



TOM & APRIL HOOPES

the husband and wife in marriage par excellence, Joseph and Mary. Search USCCB.org for the U.S. bishops' "Prayer in Defense of Marriage." Pray it each of the nine days.

Readings

Isaiah 43:16-21, Psalm 126:1-6, Philippians 3:8-14, John 8:1-11

Our Take

Today, we read about the woman caught in adultery. Tuesday is the Solemnity of St. Joseph, the husband of Mary, where we read about Joseph's decision to quietly divorce Mary. The two readings are directly related and tell us a great deal about Jesus, Joseph and our own lives.

Joseph's decision to quietly divorce Mary may seem an odd

User's Guide To Sunday

choice for a day celebrating Joseph as a husband, but today's Lenten reading gives the context necessary to understand it. He is a good husband.

When Joseph learns that his betrothed is pregnant, he has a big decision to make.

Joseph was a righteous man, says the Gospel, and he did not want to expose Mary to shame. So he decided to quietly divorce her — in other words, he made a decision that, whatever had happened in her life to bring about this pregnancy, Mary should not be punished.

Joseph made a decision to spare Mary the shame of a public denunciation — this is called "righteous" in the Gospel.

Now look at what happened in today's Gospel. The Pharisees do not hesitate to publicly humiliate the woman caught in adultery. Not only do they shame her, they show themselves involved in other sordid doings: They managed to catch her in the act of adultery, and they have somehow spared the man involved.

Jesus deals with the situation in a brilliant way. Rather than make a pronouncement on the Law, he challenges the one without sin to cast the first stone. The Pharisees walk away, starting with the elders, who know best that none of them is without sin.

The apple, as they say, does not fall far from the tree. Jesus certainly

knew how his earthly father handled a similar situation, and Jesus follows Joseph's example.

Notice two parallels between the situations in the words of Jesus.

The first thing Jesus says is, "Let the one among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her." Jesus is the one among us who is without sin, and the woman who broke the Sixth Commandment has precisely offended God. But Jesus does not pick up a stone. Like his father before him, he showed that true righteousness is shown by mercy.

Then Jesus speaks with the woman herself: "Go, and, from now on, do not sin anymore." This woman is not really in the position his Mother was in: His Mother was not adulterous. But the remedy he applies to this woman is that she follows in his Mother's footsteps — his Mother has shown us that it is possible to go and not sin. He doesn't excuse adultery; he forgives it, while calling us to a higher standard.

We can imagine Jesus saying the same words to us today. He calls us to be merciful to the sinners in our midst, and he wants to use us to give them hope. Our job isn't to shame them; after all, we too are sinners. But he does call us to show with our lives and our words that it is possible, even today, to "go and sin no more."