

POPE BENEDICT XVI

A LEGACY OF TRUTH IN LOVE

| D1

He Fed Us With His Words

Like so many others, I almost felt unfaithful.

The writings of Pope John Paul II had not only enamored us, they enthralled us. But then, when we began to read Pope Benedict XVI, was this possible?

A prose even more accessible in its clarity, so moving, so easy to read, so mystically deep and illuminating?

How could this be from one of the world's most erudite professors, a titanic scholar? The clue comes at the conclusion of his first homily as pope: "The Church ... must set out to lead people out of the desert, towards the place of life, towards friendship with the Son of God."

Pope Benedict XVI would repeat those exact words in the apostolic letter announcing the Year of Faith.

What no one knew was that these would be among Benedict's last words as pope. And so these two "book-ends" provide the interpretive key for appreciating the



FATHER PETER JOHN CAMERON, OP

whole of Benedict's papal corpus of writings.

Of course, this keynote conviction preceded Pope Benedict's ascent of the throne of St. Peter. As early as 1968, in his classic *Introduction to Christianity*, Father Joseph Ratzinger defined hell as "a loneliness which the word 'love' can no longer penetrate."

He went on to state in his book *The Principles of Catholic Theology*, "The root of the human being's wretchedness is loneliness, is the absence of love — is the fact that my existence is not embraced by a love that makes it necessary. ... What man needs is a communion that goes beyond [everything and] reaches deep into the heart of man."

It was as if Pope Benedict always wrote from this wound.

No wonder that Pope Benedict XVI's inaugural encyclical would be *God Is Love*. But this theme carries through in his ensuing two encyclicals. *Saved in Hope* reaches a crescendo with the words, "Only the great certitude of hope that my own life ... despite all failures [is] held firm by the indestructible power of Love ... gives [life] its meaning and importance." *Charity in Truth* arrests us with the remark, "One of the deepest forms of poverty a person can experience is isolation."

And who can contest a conclusion of *Jesus of Nazareth*: "Man lives on truth and on being loved: on being loved by the truth. He needs God, the God who draws close to him, interprets for him the meaning of life, and thus points him toward the path of life?"

Pope Benedict XVI wrote to the world as a friend.

The Holy Father's first words in his first encyclical resound in everything he subsequently wrote: "Being Christian is not the result of an ethical choice or a lofty idea, but the encounter with an event, a Person, which gives life a new horizon and a decisive direction."

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Bearing Christ, Engaging the World

Benedict Brought Christ-Centered Faith to a Man-Centered Culture

BY JOAN FRAWLEY DESMOND

When Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger came to New York City to deliver the 1988 Erasmus Lecture, the occasion drew top scholars, Church leaders and demonstrators who repeatedly interrupted his address.

Gregory Vall was only a graduate student when he attended the annual lecture, delivered by Cardinal Ratzinger, then the prefect of a congregation of the Church. And while the spectacle of vociferous protesters has faded from Vall's memory, he has not forgotten that first encounter with the revered Church leader.

After the cardinal delivered his address, "Biblical Interpretation in Crisis," Vall was among a group of scholars who met with him for an in-depth discussion about engaging sacred Scripture.

"He told us, 'You can refer to the traditional approach to Scripture that we find in the Church Fathers and great medieval exegetes as 'Method A,' and you can refer to the approach of modern biblical scholarship as 'Method B.' What I am calling for is a 'Method C' — a real synthesis,'" remembered Vall, now an assistant professor of theology at Ave Maria University.

"He didn't want us to ignore modern questions, but he wanted us to critique our modern sensibility from within," said Vall, who noted that the Pope, in his bestselling trilogy *Jesus of Nazareth*, modeled an approach to scriptural investigation that could help priests become more deeply formed by the word of God and thus better homilists.

Asked to identify the highlights of Pope Benedict's pontificate, U.S. theologians took note of his encyclicals on love, hope and truth, his exhortations on the Eucharist and the word of God, the Wednesday catecheses on the Psalms, and the Sunday Angelus commentaries on the day's Mass readings.

But while many extolled the breadth of his theological vision and the distinctive clarity of his limpid prose, Vall's remarks pointed to Benedict's signature contribution. He inspired many 21st-century theologians to bridge two opposing visions of reality — a Christ-centered faith and a man-centered modern culture — and thus make the riches of the faith

accessible and appealing to a new generation of would-be disciples.

Continuity and Reform

The last pope to personally experience the Second Vatican Council, Benedict has been no stranger to controversy.

During his long service as the prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, during the pontificate of Blessed John Paul II, he became the target of dissident theologians and political activists who demanded that the Church retire its teaching on contraception and women's ordination, among other issues.

But the Pope's admirers have judged his legacy very differently, and they welcomed his dynamic engagement with modernity, a stance that doesn't view contemporary values as "normative," but, rather, as symptoms of an anxious world in need of hope.

"One of the most important things he did was at the beginning of his papacy, when he met with the Curia just before Christmas and presented his understanding of how the Second Vatican Council should be read," said Boston auxiliary Bishop Arthur Kennedy.

"His understanding was that the Council should be read within the hermeneutic of continuity and reform, and it should not be read through a hermeneutic of discontinuity, as a revolution against the Tradition."

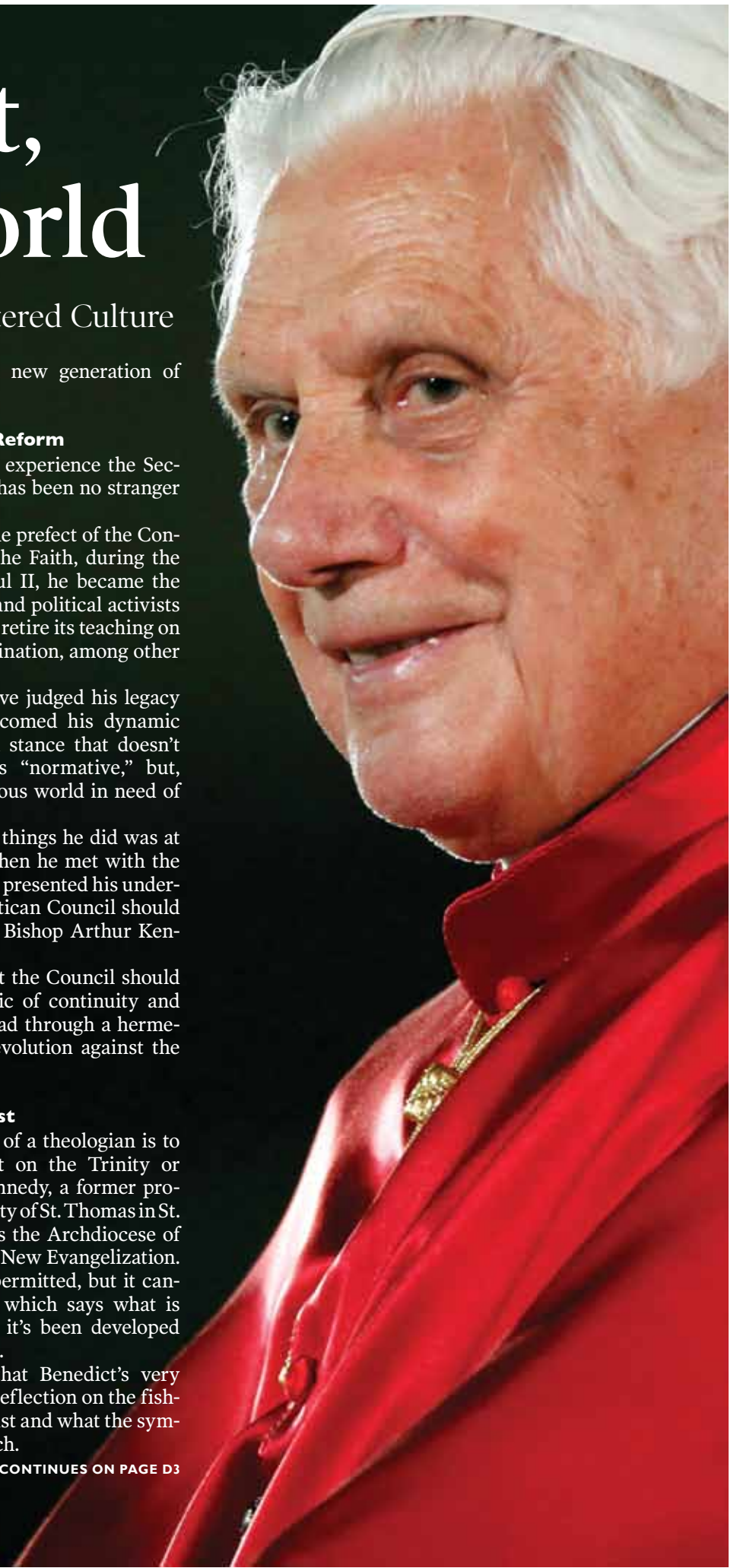
Life in Christ

For the Pope, the "first task of a theologian is to recover what has been taught on the Trinity or Christology," added Bishop Kennedy, a former professor of theology at the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, Minn., who now serves as the Archdiocese of Boston's episcopal vicar for the New Evangelization.

Theological speculation is permitted, but it cannot "replace the magisterium, which says what is true regarding the mystery as it's been developed with Tradition," the bishop said.

Bishop Kennedy recalled that Benedict's very first homily as pope featured a reflection on the fisherman's ring of the vicar of Christ and what the symbol signified for the early Church.

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REUTERS/ALESSIA PIERDOMENICO

Calming the Storm of Vatican II

In his 2005 Christmas address to the Roman Curia, Pope Benedict strikingly referenced St. Basil's assessment of the post-Nicene Council period that described the Church as being in a naval battle in the darkness of a storm, where chaos made it impossible to discern the truth. Benedict was quick to say that things post-Vatican II were not quite so stormy, but he acknowledged there have been serious problems.

Shortly before resigning, in his remarks to the clergy of the Diocese of Rome, Benedict made another pointed statement. There were, he declared, two councils: "There was the Council of the Fathers — the true Council — but

there was also the council of the media ... and the world perceived the Council through ... the media." For a while, the Pope noted, the media's virtual council was stronger than the real Council. But now, 50 years after the start of the Council, the real one is prevailing.



PIA DE SOLENNI

These two significant papal speeches highlight that his task and that of his post-Vatican II predecessors (particularly Blessed John Paul II) has been to set the ship right so as to quiet the proverbial storm within which the Church has found herself.

When he addressed the Curia,

Benedict identified two contrary hermeneutics, or interpretations, that have shaped the understandings of the Council. One is the hermeneutic of discontinuity and rupture that, he stated, "has frequently availed itself of the sympathies of the mass media."

An example of this would be the argument for women priests. In a secular context, where women are seen doing all the things men can do, it makes no sense to not have women priests; so proponents leave the context of Catholic teachings and turn instead to the sympathetic secular media that has no understanding of the Church's rich Tradition. It's not unlike a child who knows that the parent with all the facts is going to

deny her request; so she goes to the parent who doesn't have all the information, knowing that she'll probably get what she wants.

Alternatively, there is the hermeneutic of reform and renewal in the continuity of the Church, which Benedict affirmed in his 2005 address by citing the words of Pope John XXIII at the opening of the Second Vatican Council in 1962: "The substance of the ancient doctrine of the deposit of faith is one thing, and the way in which it is presented is another ... retaining the same meaning and message."

Interestingly, people with very different views of the Church fall into the category of those who see the Council as a rupture with the

past. On the one hand, there are those — such as the advocates of the ordination of women — who advanced a so-called "spirit" of Vatican II to allow everything and nothing at the same time. As Benedict explains, "[A] vast margin was left open for the question on how this spirit should subsequently be defined, and room was consequently made for every whim."

And then there are some traditionalist Catholics who hold that almost everything post-conciliar has been deficient and lacking in orthodoxy. Councils have always been an answer to a crisis, but to these traditionalists, apparently, some sort of a golden age existed

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His Papacy, 2005-2013

April
August
October
December

2005

April 19, 2005: Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger is elected the 265th pope and takes the name Benedict XVI.

April 21: Benedict announces his email address: benedictxvi@vatican.va.

April 24: Pope Benedict XVI celebrates his papal inauguration Mass in St. Peter's Square.

Aug. 16-21: The Pope takes his first papal trip: World Youth Day in Cologne, Germany; he also traveled to Poland, Spain and Turkey this year.

Oct. 3-23: The Synod of Bishops on the Eucharist is held.

Dec. 25: Benedict releases his first encyclical, *Deus Caritas Est* (God Is Love).

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PHOTO SOURCES LEFT TO RIGHT: MARIO TAMA/GETTY IMAGES; FRANCO ORIGLIA/GETTY IMAGES; WIKIPEDIA; SHUTTERSTOCK

Benedict's Men: U.S. Vocations Rise

BY PETER JESSERER SMITH

WASHINGTON — Pope Benedict XVI's papacy may have lasted eight years, but the retiring Holy Father and his reforms have left their mark on the American priesthood and sparked a new uptick in vocations.

Father Michael Roche, 34, remembers when he left his desk at a Pittsburgh accounting firm to watch the news of Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger's election to the papacy in 2005.

"I was just thrilled and filled with tremendous joy," Father Roche recalled. He had walked away from his cubicle at the Grossman, Yanak and Ford building upon hearing the news of "white smoke" to watch the television in the company cafeteria. He was a layman asking questions about his vocation at the time and felt a surge of excitement to learn that Cardinal Ratzinger, whom he viewed as "a figure of strength in the Church," had accepted the call to take the Chair of Peter.

Father Roche recounted the words of Pope Benedict to young people at his inauguration Mass that inspired his priestly vocation: "Do not be afraid of Christ! He takes nothing away, and he gives you everything. ... Open wide the doors to Christ — and you will find true life."

"That was pivotal in my life," Father Roche told the Register. "I can't say I had been afraid of Christ, but I was not convinced that a vocation to the diocesan priesthood could be lived in this day and age."

But Benedict's words filled the young Catholic with a new confidence to discern his vocation. Less than a year later, he joined the seminary to become a priest for the Diocese of Pittsburgh.

As Pope Benedict leaves the papacy to make way for a new successor, U.S. vocations directors say they've seen a surge in new applicants to their seminaries in recent years.

Father Carter Griffin, vice rector at Blessed John Paul II Seminary in Washington, said the Archdiocese of Washington's new seminary opened its doors in 2011 and is already near capacity.

"Benedict was able to open up new vistas to people," Father Griffin said. "For them, to see this man of profound faith, love and hope on the world stage has been an enormous benefit on the world and on vocations."

It's a scenario that is also playing out at



PERSONAL INTEREST IN VOCATIONS. Pope Benedict XVI meets with seminarians Feb. 8 at the Romano Maggiore seminary in Rome. Reuters/Tony Gentile

already established seminaries such as Mount St. Mary's in Emmitsburg, Md.

"We're experiencing the largest numbers that we have had in years," said Msgr. Stuart Swetland, who teaches pre-theology to seminarians at the Mount.

Msgr. Swetland said that most of the men he teaches are between the ages of 21-25 and were teenagers when Blessed John Paul II died.

"They are more affected by Benedict," he said. "I think the young are responding to the fact that he takes them seriously enough to do something beyond themselves."

A Seminarian's Perspective

Pope Benedict's challenge to young people to embrace the faith and the New Evangelization captured the imagination of Andrew Buonopane, 24, now a second-year seminarian for the Washington Archdiocese.

"The Year of Faith and the call to the New Evangelization are right up my alley, personally," Buonopane said. "It addresses the concerns of skeptics and non-believers in ways that make sense to them."

Buonopane knows this from personal experience. Encountering the Pope during his historic April 2008 visit to Washington played a key part of Buonopane's return to the Catholic faith during his college days at George Washington University.

"It's solely during his papacy that I've been conscious of God and my faith life," he said, adding that he continued to deepen his faith by reading the Pope's works. "As I started to learn more about my faith, Benedict was there for me."

Worldwide, the Catholic Church has seen an increase of more than 6,000 priests during Benedict's papacy, most of them to the diocesan priesthood, according to data collected by Georgetown University's Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA). The number of diocesan priests in the world exceeded 277,000 in 2010, levels higher than those recorded in 1970, the year Paul VI introduced the new form of the Roman liturgy.

Father Sean McKnight, executive director for the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee of Clergy, Religious and Consecrated Life and Vocations, said that the United States experienced the depths of its decline in the numbers of new priests and seminarians during the 1980s and 1990s.

The U.S. defied a global turnaround in the Church's vocation decline that occurred under Blessed John Paul II. Worldwide, the annual number of new diocesan priestly ordinations had increased by nearly 2,500 between 1985 and 2005, when 6,614 men were ordained. Graduate-level seminarians increased

from more than 43,000 to about 58,500.

Yet, over the same time period in the U.S., the annual number of priestly ordinations had dropped from 533 to 454, and new seminarians had declined from 4,000 to 3,300.

Halting the Decline

Father McKnight said that Blessed John Paul II did much to staunch the hemorrhaging of U.S. vocations, but Benedict was able to take additional action that helped change the priesthood's image of corruption and embolden "good, healthy candidates to come forward."

"Benedict has helped ensure that Catholics know there is a very good program and norms for the formation of our priests in place at seminaries," Father McKnight said.

Under the authority of Pope Benedict, the Vatican's Congregation for Catholic Education put in place new strict directives for seminaries in 2005, calling for screening requirements that barred candidates with "deep-seated homosexual tendencies" or psychological immaturity from entering the priesthood.

The same congregation also launched an apostolic visitation of U.S. seminaries, sending teams of three and four to inspect more than 200 U.S. seminaries and formation houses between 2005-2006. The final report recommended that seminary rectors keep "barriers to ordination high," encouraged bimonthly confession for seminarians, advocated a return to traditional acts of piety and a shoring up of seminarians' intellectual formation and training in moral theology.

Benedict's encouragement of the U.S. bishops to look for "quality not quantity" in potential new priests also relieved bishops of the pressure to try to remedy the priest shortage by accepting unsuitable candidates, Father McKnight said. And U.S. seminaries greatly benefited from the influx of highly qualified and credentialed formators the bishops commissioned in response to the Vatican's report, according to Father McKnight.

"The seminary-formation programs require a critical number of priests that are properly credentialed in the various philosophical and theological fields," he said. "In general, the more we improve the quality of formation in our seminaries, the more vocations we retain, and the more ordinations we have."

Father McKnight said his committee has witnessed a steady increase in new ordinations and seminarians since 2006. According to CARA, new U.S. ordinations rose to 480 in 2012, and the number of seminarians had increased to more than 3,700.

Bishop Fabian Bruskewitz, bishop emeritus of the Diocese of Lincoln, Neb., said the Church needed to screen out candidates with same-sex attraction, which he said has fueled "a great deal of sexual scandal and misconduct" that has roiled the Church.

"The priesthood is a precious and wonderful gift that God gave to his Church," Bishop Bruskewitz said. "There are certain people who are just not suitable to the priest's function of standing in the person of Christ."

Bishop Bruskewitz oversaw a surge of vocations in the Diocese of Lincoln under both John Paul II and Benedict XVI. He said that both Popes were "in sync" with each other and inspired seminarians to adopt the "authentic interpretation" of the Second Vatican Council and its spiritual reforms. But he said Pope Benedict brought to the papacy a much stronger emphasis on liturgical prayer and the learning of Latin.

Bishop Bruskewitz cited the Holy Father's 2007 *motu proprio Summorum Pontificum*, which authorized wider celebration of the old form of the Roman rite, and said Benedict's own example in celebrating the liturgy had increased "attention to liturgical tradition [among priests and seminarians] more than in years before."

Lesson of Humility

Benedict XVI's last act in the papacy has left the priests and seminarians whose vocations he inspired with a profound lesson of humility.

"It's a reminder that the priestly ministry is never about me," Buonopane remarked. "It's not based off what a great person I am, my particular gifts, charisma or anything that I might provide for myself. It's only founded on the instrumentality God entrusts me with."

Buonopane said Benedict's influence will forever leave its mark on his vocation.

"The Church is certainly worth my life," he said. "Benedict gave me confidence in the Church that I was dedicating myself to."

Peter Jesserer Smith writes from Rochester, New York.

Professor Pope

BY JOAN FRAWLEY DESMOND

SAN FRANCISCO — Father Joseph Fessio, the Jesuit priest who founded Ignatius Press, has known Pope Benedict XVI since 1972, when the American priest began doctoral studies at the University of Regensburg, where then-Father Joseph Ratzinger had a strong following among graduate students.

Father Ratzinger was just 45 years old when the young American Jesuit from San Francisco arrived at the university, but the German-born academic had already earned a reputation for explaining difficult theological concepts in clear, incisive language.

"He was different, and people came to listen to him. He offered a very personal, meditative reflection. As people now recognize, he was articulate, organized and coherent," recalled Father Fessio, during an interview that shared

recollections of Ratzinger's role as a teacher and offered an appreciation of his gifts as an author.

But Father Ratzinger's intellectual gifts were even more striking during the graduate seminars, "where there would be five or six of us. In each session, one person would make a presentation, and others would respond," Father Fessio remembered. "Father Ratzinger would listen, and then, in the discussion, he would make sure that others also spoke. My German was not good, and I couldn't say very much."

During the seminars, Father Ratzinger "would sit back, and then, at the end of the seminar, in two or three sentences, he would summarize all that was said. He pulled the discussion together into an organic whole in a way that was always illuminating."

A Way With Words

Father Fessio soon learned that the same luminous clarity enlivened Father Ratzinger's published works.

"Back in 1968, when he published the *Introduction to Christianity*, the prose was already there," said Father Fessio, refer-

ring to a work that remains a key textbook for graduate theological studies.

When the Catechism of the Catholic Church was completed in 1992, during the pontificate of Blessed John Paul II, Father Fessio reviewed the text and immediately noticed that it bore signs of Joseph Ratzinger's distinctive ability to synthesize challenging material. At the time, then-Cardinal Ratzinger was the president of the Catechism's Preparatory Commission, which worked for six years to complete the project.

"When I first received the Catechism, I spent a whole retreat meditating on the Table of Contents — it was so beautiful. The Catechism wasn't just a summary or a book of lists, it presented the faith as an organic whole," said Father Fessio.

After his mentor was elected pope, Catholics across the globe had their first taste of Benedict's literary gifts.

"Love is possible, and we are able to practice it because we are created in the image of God. To experience love and in this way to cause the light of God to enter into the world — this is the invita-

tion I would like to extend with the present encyclical," wrote Pope Benedict XVI in *Deus Caritas Est*, his first encyclical.

"He is like a painter using his palette to produce a portrait," said Father Fessio, noting that the Pope also managed to work his magic in collaborative synodal documents as well as his encyclicals.

"He uses simple images — light and dark. You notice the same thing when you open up *The Lord of the Rings* and begin reading a paragraph: The majority of words are one syllable, and they convey profound thoughts and emotions."

Thus, when Pope Benedict was enthroned in 2005, "he talked about the *pallium*, and, when he spoke to the cardinals, he noted that red is for martyrdom."

Same Man, Different Settings

Over the course of more than 40 years, Father Fessio has stayed in touch with his former professor, meeting with other students from Regensburg for annual gatherings and collaborating on a variety of projects. During that time, the priest said, he has witnessed very

little change in the man who resigned from the Petrine office on Feb. 28.

"He was always a theologian of the Church," he said. "I saw the same man doing the same thing in different settings. He is a faithful servant, and Blessed John Paul II relied on him a good deal."

"But look how the liturgy changed as soon as Benedict was made pope. Chant was introduced. It means that he was not in favor of the kind of liturgies that Pope John Paul II celebrated, but he accepted it. And when he was pope, he acted differently."

Indeed, while media commentators still dredge up Cardinal Ratzinger's nickname of "God's Rottweiler" from his days as prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Father Fessio has "never heard him raise his voice. He was always a listener, even at the CDF."

"I wouldn't call him shy; I would call him reserved. He is not someone who would enjoy a cocktail party," said Father Fessio.

"Yes, he is firm. He has tremendous confidence because he has confidence in Christ. Friendship in Christ: It is the bass note in

all his work."

The resulting spiritual serenity sustained him amid the tumultuous decades following the Second Vatican Council, when the German cardinal sparked animosity by insisting that the Council did not constitute a break with the continuity of Catholic Tradition.

Father Fessio recalled a remark the Pope made during a meeting some time after his election.

Another Catholic publisher asked the Holy Father why only Ignatius Press was publishing his works. Father Fessio recalled that the Pope calmly responded, "Because when no one else cared, they published my works."

When Father Fessio learned that the Pope would resign during Lent, he quickly grasped the significance of his timing.

"He was born during Holy Week," he said. "And I am confident he chose the time for his resignation because he wanted the next pope as an 'Easter' pope, with time for reflection."

Added Father Fessio, "His life begins and ends with the Paschal mystery."

Joan Frawley Desmond is the Register's senior editor.

<p>March 24: The Holy Father names 15 new cardinals.</p>	<p>July 8-9: The Pope travels to the Fifth World Meeting of Families in Spain.</p>	<p>Nov. 28-Dec. 1: The Pope travels to Turkey.</p>	<p>March 13: Benedict releases post-synodal apostolic exhortation on the Eucharist, <i>Sacramentum Caritatis</i> (The Sacrament of Charity).</p>	<p>May 9-13: Benedict visits Brazil to address CELAM, the Latin American Bishops' Council.</p>	<p>Sept. 7-9: The Holy Father visits Austria.</p>	<p>Feb. 4: The Pope modifies the prayer for the Jewish people prayed in the Good Friday liturgy.</p>	<p>July 13-21: Benedict celebrates World Youth Day in Sydney.</p>	<p>Oct. 8: Opening Mass for the Synod on the Word of God.</p>			
<p>2006</p> <p>March</p>		<p>2007</p> <p>July</p>		<p>2008</p> <p>September</p>		<p>2008</p> <p>February</p>		<p>2008</p> <p>July</p>		<p>2008</p> <p>October</p>	
<p>2006</p> <p>May</p>		<p>2007</p> <p>September</p>		<p>2008</p> <p>April</p>		<p>2008</p> <p>July</p>		<p>2008</p> <p>November</p>		<p>2008</p> <p>April</p>	
<p>May 25-28: Benedict travels to Poland.</p>	<p>Sept. 9-14: Benedict travels to Germany; gives address at the University of Regensburg, where he quotes a Byzantine scholar who linked Islam with violence. Many Muslim leaders are offended and outraged.</p>		<p>April: The Holy Father publishes Vol. 1 of <i>Jesus of Nazareth</i>.</p>	<p>July 7, 2007: The Pope releases <i>Summorum Pontificum</i> on the use of the Roman liturgy according to the Missal of 1962, specifying that Masses celebrated in Latin according to this "extraordinary form" are part of the recognized liturgical practice of the Church.</p>		<p>Nov. 30: Benedict releases <i>Spe Salvi</i> (Saved in Hope) encyclical.</p>	<p>April: Benedict visits the U.S., traveling to Washington and New York; he meets with victims of clerical abuse and visits Ground Zero.</p>	<p>Sept. 15: Benedict visits the Shrine of Our Lady of Lourdes, France, to celebrate its 150th anniversary.</p>			

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Council

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just before Vatican II, and John XXIII called together the bishops for a Council not to discuss challenges, but to applaud each other for the successes of the Church around the world.

In 2005 and recently, Benedict made clear that the Council was convened to face difficult problems the Church needed to address. Broadly speaking, there was the question of how it should engage in the modern world. Benedict notes the Church at the time was not "robust," and "it seemed like a reality of the past and not the bearer of the future." There was also a clear tension in the pre-conciliar liturgy. He describes it as almost two parallel liturgies: the priest with the Missal and the altar servers and the laypeople with their prayer books.

The Council led with liturgical reforms, enhancing the mutual participation at Mass of the celebrant and the congregation, and then delved into specific temporal questions facing the Church. It subsequently delivered several foundational documents required to enable the Church to engage effectively with a world that had

changed dramatically. But it would be decades before the dust began to settle. In the meantime, there would be plenty of casualties to conform with St. Basil's image of a battle. Many of us were born post-Vatican II, but we all continue to live the Vatican II challenge in one way or another. In no way is the work of the Council complete, and much of the work up to now has been simply clarifying which Council is our source — the Council of the Fathers or the council of the media.

Ironically, the council of the media tends to portray John Paul II and Benedict as reactionary traditionalists. In fact, they have been the modernizing popes, constantly engaging the world in what Benedict calls "true reform," a "combination of continuity and discontinuity at different levels."

While his 2005 address was eminently clear, it did not get a lot of attention by Catholics or the secular media. The fact that Benedict chose to tackle this same topic in one of his final addresses, when we are all paying attention, indicates the great importance of this issue.

Pia de Solenni is a moral theologian and cultural analyst. She resides in Seattle.

Writings

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Here lies the secret to this great genius' ability to present complex teachings in the most limpid way. Benedict's apostolic exhortation on the Eucharist, *Sacrament of Charity*, articulates his hermeneutic: "Today there is a need to rediscover that Jesus Christ is not just a private conviction or an abstract idea, but a real Person whose becoming part of human history is capable of renewing the life of every man and woman."

Pope Benedict wrote "personally" in every sense of that word. Accordingly, in his apostolic exhortation *The Word of the Lord* — where the word "encounter" appears 44 times (and *passim* in the rest of his writings) — His Holiness asserts: "There is no greater priority than this: to enable the people of our time once more to encounter God, the God who speaks to us and shares his love so that we might have life in abundance." Pope Benedict's writings effect that encounter.

Benedict's literary use of symbols is both intriguing and provocative. For example, his famous phrase "the dictatorship of relativism" communicates what he con-

siders the central problem of the faith today: an epidemic abdication of reason by which society forfeits values and in the process loses its own identity, degenerating "into open or insidious totalitarianism" ("Address to Principality of Andorra," Dec. 1, 2005).

His image of "the zone of dissimilarity" evokes the experience of "godforsakenness ... a remoteness from God, in which [man] no longer reflects him, and so has become dissimilar not only to God, but to himself, to what being human truly is" ("Meeting With Representatives From the World of Culture," Collège des Bernardins, Paris, Sept. 12, 2008).

And the notion "nostalgia for the Infinite" symbolizes how faith still stands a chance in the world because "in man there is an inextinguishable nostalgic aspiration toward the Infinite. None of the answers sought is sufficient; only the God who has made himself finite ... is able to meet the questions of our being" (*Truth and Tolerance*, pp. 142-143).

Whenever I bring up one of these expressions in my preaching, it never fails to pique the congregation's interest.

As for assessing the lasting impact of the Pontiff's writings, we may not gain an able gauge until

the publication of the collected edition of all Pope Benedict XVI's homilies.

In their richness and spiritual radiance, they rival those of Pope St. Leo the Great (who died in 461) — which is to say nothing of Pope Benedict's general audience catecheses on the Psalms, the apostles, the Fathers of the Church, prayer, faith, etc.

Ultimately, what makes the writings of Pope Benedict XVI so exceptional and compelling is their confessional quality. Benedict writes as a bona fide witness. And through a witness, by his "actions, words and way of being, Another makes himself present" (*Sacramentum Caritatis*, 85).

Benedict's writing fulfills a principle he enunciated in his youth: "The conversation between people only comes into its own when they are no longer trying to express something, but to express themselves" (*Introduction to Christianity*). Which explains why Pope Benedict can write such a captivating line in *Verbum Domini* as this: "In the world of God proclaimed and heard, and in the sacraments, Jesus says today, here and now, to each person: 'I am yours; I give myself to you' — so that we can receive and respond, saying in return: 'I am yours'" (51).

It's a papal document as love letter.

Pope Benedict states twice in his pontificate: "We must learn to penetrate the secret of language, to understand it in its structure and its mode of expression" (*Verbum Domini*, 12, and "Address to the Representatives of the World of Culture," Collège des Bernardins, Paris, Sept. 12, 2008).

Benedict has mastered this secret himself, and, by it, he led us out of the desert.

"We have been given hope, trustworthy hope, by virtue of which we can face our present: The present, even if it is arduous, can be lived and accepted if it leads toward a goal, if we can be sure of this goal and if this goal is great enough to justify the effort of the journey," Benedict writes in *Spe Salvi*.

We can put our trust in this hope at this particularly challenging moment in the Church's history precisely because the writings of His Holiness Benedict XVI have enabled us to do so.

Dominican Father Peter John Cameron is the editor in chief of Magnificat and the editor of the book Benedictus: Day by Day With Pope Benedict XVI (Magnificat/Ignatius Press, 2006).

Theologian

CONTINUING PAGE D1 STORY

"He opened the windows for people who weren't theologians, giving them access to the Divine action taking place in all the sacraments and sacramentals of the Church."

In this way, Pope Benedict has placed his theological work at the service of the New Evangelization, inviting poorly catechized Catholics and the spiritually indifferent to experience a joyful "friendship with the Son of God."

"Being Christian is not the result of an ethical choice or a lofty idea, but the encounter with an event, a Person, which gives life a new horizon and a decisive direction," he wrote in his first encyclical, *Deus Caritas Est* (God Is Love).

In a world that often pushes religious experience and witness to the sidelines, the Pope offered an integrated vision of a life in Christ, anchored in the belief that faith and reason belong together and provide the foundation for a true community of persons.

Faith and Reason

Thus, in a 2005 address preceding his election as pope, he warned of a "dictatorship of relativism, which does not recognize anything as for certain and which has as its highest goal one's own ego and one's own desires." This ethos of self-assertion dismisses inconvenient moral truths as an impediment to human freedom, and the Pope warned that this cultural current had precipitated a crisis of reason and faith, paving the way for a direct challenge to inalienable human rights, including religious liberty. But he was also aware that many Catholics viewed their cradle faith as an enemy of reason.

Cardinal William Levada, who served under Pope Benedict as prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith until he stepped down last year, told the Register that the Pope has sought to frame "the whole discussion of faith and reason. He has keen insights on that subject and how it plays out in secular culture. Reason is the common human gift that allows us to speak to one another."

Mary Shivanandan, a professor of theology at the Pontifical John Paul II Institute for Studies on Marriage and Family in Washington, noted that Benedict, like his predecessor, "was a champion of reason and the role of faith ... and boldly linked *Humanae Vitae* to true human development."

Shivanandan singled out the Pope's third encyclical, *Caritas in Veritate* (Charity in Truth).

The encyclical laid out a vision of "integrated human development" that embraced charity in truth in both intimate personal relationships and in economic relationships and thus upended the false dichotomy between Catholic moral doctrine dealing with human sexuality and social teachings that call for economic justice and solidarity.

His belief that only God's love and truth can secure dignity posed a direct challenge to the modern creeds of secularism and individualism, even as it helped to lay the foundation for a more intense ecumenical dialogue between Catholics and

some Protestant denominations and groups.

Liturgical Renewal

Philosopher and author Michael Novak, who teaches at Ave Maria University, praised Benedict's steady efforts to foster substantial dialogue across denominational boundaries.

"There are an untold number of Anglicans in America and worldwide who no longer trust a weathervane on the steeple but want a steadfast cross. Benedict has bent over backwards to help them approach by degrees and by bringing the superior elements of their own tradition with them," said Novak, referencing the new Anglican-use ordinariate, which has made it possible for Anglicans to come into full communion with the Church.

The decision to allow members of the new ordinariate to retain their liturgical traditions and prayers marks Pope Benedict's lifelong appreciation for beautiful liturgies and scriptural translations, culminating in the introduction of the new Roman Missal in 2011.

The Pope "has displayed extraordinary sensitivity to liturgical practice," said Cardinal Levada, "weaving the Scriptures and rites of liturgy into a message of hope and love, always reminding us that each of us in our own way is directed toward the theological virtues of faith, hope and love."

Msgr. Kevin Irwin, former dean of the School of Theology at The Catholic University of America and holder of the Walter J. Schmitz Chair in Liturgical Studies, drew attention to the Pope's 2010 post-synodal exhortation *Verbum Domini* (The Word of the Lord) as a document echoing "many of the salient points of Pope Benedict's pontificate."

In *Verbum Domini*, Pope Benedict writes that the "sacramentality of the word can thus be understood by analogy with the real presence of Christ under the appearances of the consecrated bread and wine."

Continues the papal document, "By approaching the altar and partaking in the Eucharistic banquet, we truly share in the body and blood of Christ. The proclamation of God's word at the celebration entails an acknowledgment that Christ himself is present, that he speaks to us and that he wishes to be heard."

Msgr. Irwin expressed the wish that bishops and theologians build on the Pope's work, which he said has implications for the future of the Church's liturgy and also for the New Evangelization.

Said Msgr. Irwin, "Unquestionably, this apostolic exhortation both deepens what has been said about the proclamation of the word and about the presence of Christ in the word since the constitution on the sacred liturgy from Vatican II (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*), which itself was a watershed text, given the preceding four centuries of post-Tridentine Church life and magisterial apologetics."

Don Briel, director of the Center for Catholic Studies at the University of St. Thomas, noted that the liturgy brings the human person into a new relationship with the Divine, but he added that the Pope's reform reflected an awareness that mainstream culture also hungered for contemplation and beauty.

Said Briel, "He has helped to

recover a more organic and incarnational understanding of the Church, with his emphasis on the Church as a communion of persons, not so much an institutional structure."

Indeed, as Benedict commences a secluded life of prayer and study at the convent within the Vatican, theologians who admire his work expressed the hope that his penetrating response to the crisis of faith and of reason would help transform the faith of ordinary Catholics and fire the work of the New Evangelization.

"We are in tension," Bishop Kennedy said. "That is why the New Evangelization, however difficult, became so crucial for Benedict and Blessed John Paul II."

Added Bishop Kennedy, "It means reawakening the soul to the mystery of God, to the love that comes to us through Christ, and to the mystery that the Church brings through the presence of the Spirit. It also means that once we understand the truth and love that comes with Christ, that knowledge will begin to transform what we mean by human knowing."

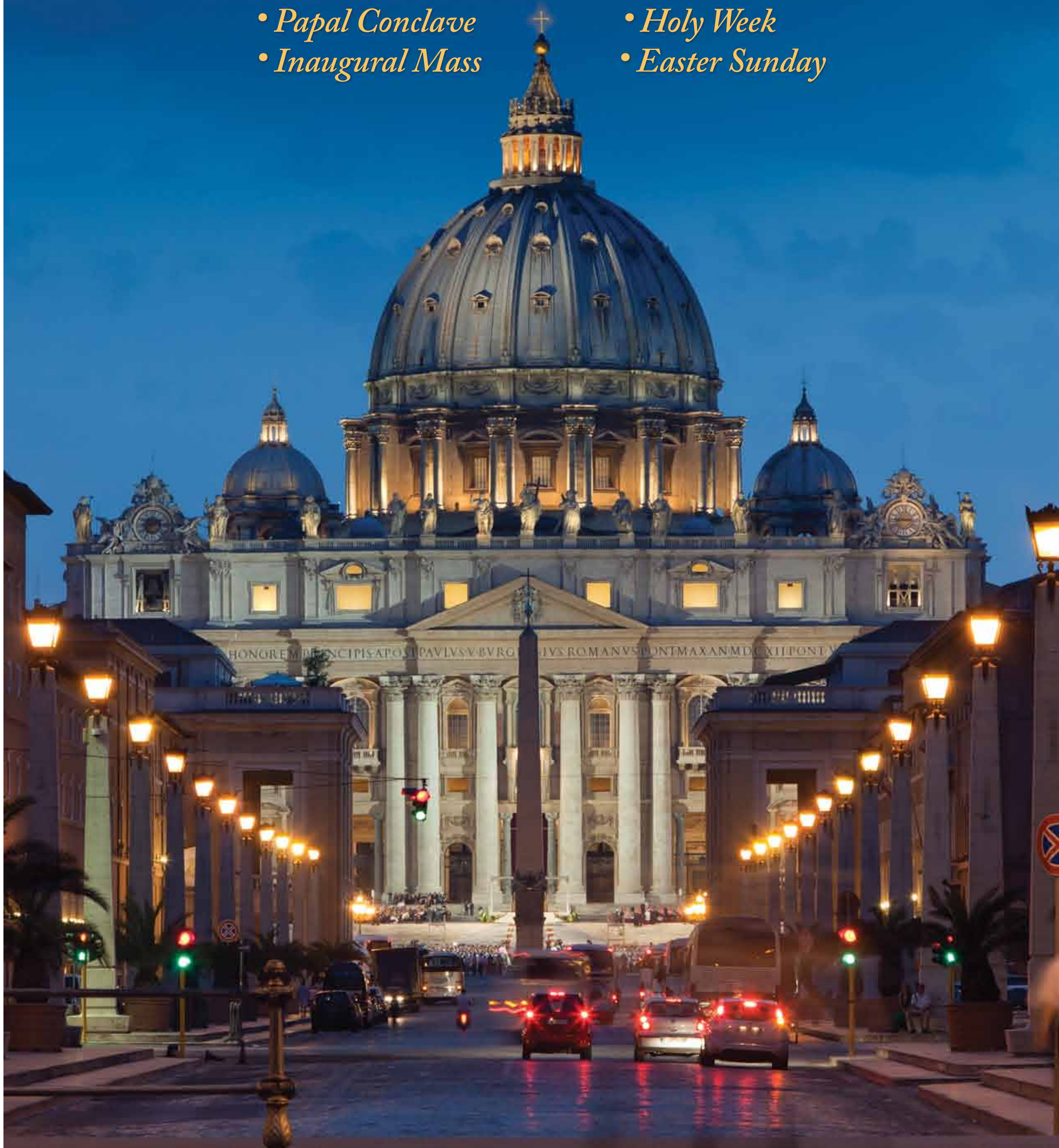
Joan Frawley Desmond is the Register's senior editor.

Catholic Showcase

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TRUTH IN LOVE: THE PAPACY OF POPE BENEDICT XVI

Theological Renewal Through the Mass

Benedict, Profound Liturgist

Pope Benedict XVI, one of the greatest theologians ever to serve as pope, is also one of the most profound liturgists.

In the vast work of Pope Benedict, throughout his lifetime, we can see that theology and liturgy are intrinsically related — inseparable, really. This is because the “Eucharist is the source and summit of the Christian life,” as the Second Vatican Council succinctly stated (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 47), and “the other sacraments, and indeed all ecclesiastical ministries and works of the apostolate, are bound up with the Eucharist and are oriented toward it. For in the blessed Eucharist is contained the whole spiritual good of the Church, namely Christ himself, our Pasch” (*Lumen Gentium*, 11).

This is revealed in his many works long before he became pope, especially during his

HELEN HULL HITCHCOCK

long tenure as prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (e.g., *Called to Communion*, 1991; *The Spirit of the Liturgy*, 1999; and *A New Song for the Lord*, 1995).

Most English-speaking Catholics today probably think that the new English translation of the Roman Missal is the most significant sign of Pope Benedict's concern with the Church's liturgy. Certainly, this far more accurate and sacred-sounding translation, in use now since Advent 2011 in the English-speaking world, signals the Holy Father's effort to recover, restore and intensify the sacredness of Roman Catholic worship.

What far fewer people know is that his concern with accurate translation dates from his years at the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and from his personal involvement in producing the Catechism of the Catholic Church and his responsibility for overseeing Scripture translation.

The CDF developed norms for

Scripture translation that were later incorporated into the 2001 instruction on translation, *Liturgiam Authenticam*, which in turn governed the translation of the new edition of the Missal.

Though the new Missal translation is the most dramatic, it is only one example of Pope Benedict's actions to assure that the truth and beauty of God are united in our liturgical worship — and that this union may take several forms.

This is reflected in what can be termed his ecumenical outreach — to Eastern Orthodox Christians as well as to others. Two striking examples are the apostolic letter *Summorum Pontificum* “on the use of the Roman liturgy prior to the reform of 1970” (July 7, 2007) and the unprecedented apostolic constitution *Anglicanorum Coetibus* (Providing for Personal Ordinariates for Anglicans Entering Into Full Communion With the Catholic Church) (Nov. 4, 2009).

It is probably no coincidence that Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger became Pope Benedict XVI in April 2005, during the Year of the Eucharist, convened by his predecessor, Pope John Paul II. A Synod of Bishops on the Eucharist (“The Eucharist: Source and Summit of the Life and Mission of the Church”) took place in October of his first year as pope.

Pope Benedict's first apostolic exhortation *Sacramentum Caritatis* (Sacrament of Love) followed the Synod of Bishops on the Eucharist on March 13, 2007.

The next Synod of Bishops was on the Word of God, held in October 2008. His apostolic exhortation on that synod, *Verbum Domini* (The Word of the Lord), devoted a section to the “The Liturgy, Privileged Setting for the Word of God” and closed with a call to a “new hearing” of the Word of God as essential to the New Evangelization.

In clear continuity with this is the most recent Synod on the New Evangelization, which concluded last October.

The fundamental importance of liturgy to the Catholic faith has been a consistent focus of the teaching of Pope Benedict.

“The liturgy is indeed the celebration of the central event of human history, the redemptive sacrifice of Christ,” the Holy Father said in an *ad limina* address to French bishops last Nov. 17. “Thus it

bears witness to the love with which God loves humanity, to the fact that human life has a meaning and that it is through their vocation that men and women are called to share in the glorious life of the Trinity.”

“Humanity needs this witness,” he continued. “People need to perceive, through the liturgical celebrations, that the Church is aware of the lordship of God and of the dignity of the human being. She has the right to be able to discern, over and above the limitations that will always mark her rites and ceremonies, that Christ is present in the sacrifice of Mass and in the person of the minister,” he said.

It is crucial, therefore, to “cultivate the art of celebrating” and to “work ceaselessly for the liturgical formation of seminarians and of the faithful. Respect for the established norms expresses love and fidelity for the faith of the Church, for the treasure of grace that she preserves and transmits; the beauty of celebrations, far more than innovations and subjective adjustments, makes evangelization a lasting and effective work.”

In his final address to the Roman clergy on Feb. 14, in which he briefly explained the Second Vatican Council (and misinterpretations of it), he said he regarded it as an “act of Providence that at the beginning of the Council was the liturgy; God; adoration.”

In his Jan. 30 general audience, he assured us that “faith gives us this certainty, which becomes a secure rock in constructing our lives: We can face all the moments of difficulty and danger, the experience of the darkness of crisis and of times of pain, supported by our faith that God does not leave us alone and is always near.”

Truly, Pope Benedict has been an example to us all of true fatherhood — giving us guidance and encouragement, knowledge and strength to live our Catholic faith with integrity and fidelity.

Our gratitude to the Holy Father is profound.

Helen Hull Hitchcock is the co-founder of Adoremus, The Society for Renewal of the Sacred Liturgy, which produces both the The Adoremus Bulletin and The Adoremus Hymnal — Second Edition. She is also the founding director of Women for Faith & Family.

Rich Course in Priestly Formation

FALL RIVER, Mass. — As much as we know that Jesus is the Supreme Pastor of the Church and will never leave us orphans, we all feel a little liturgically orphaned and awkward today.

The full reality of Benedict XVI's resignation is hitting us when, during the Eucharistic Prayer, the rubrics command us to skip over the part in which, for the last 2,873 days, we have prayed “for Benedict, our pope” and to express our communion immediately with our bishop, the clergy and the faithful.

For me as a priest — and for many of my priest-brothers — praying for Benedict was never just a ritual duty or an act of

FATHER ROGER LANDRY

ordinary filial piety. It was something we did full of gratitude and fervor, because of the many ways Benedict enhanced our priestly prayer, life and apostolate.

St. Peter had received the commission from the Lord to “strengthen your brothers in the faith,” and Benedict, his 264th successor, fortified us in faith and made us better priests.

Benedict's papacy can be summed up as an incredibly rich course of continuing priestly formation.

He did this first by his teaching, in which he allowed us to enter into his head and heart and understand so much more about what we are called to believe, live and preach.

His three-volume examination of the life of *Jesus of Nazareth*, his encyclicals on love, hope and truth, his exhortations on the Eucharist and the word of God, his question-and-answer and *lectio divina* sessions with priests, his addresses to clergy on foreign trips, his catecheses on the Psalms, saints, prayer and faith, his Angelus addresses and his homilies constitute a corpus that will nourish priests for centuries.

We were able to profit from them in real time.

Of particular usefulness were his commentaries on the Sunday Mass readings that he would give at the Sunday Angelus.

In three paragraphs, with depth and clarity, he would get right to the

heart of the readings. In my homily preparation, I would always consult what Benedict had said three or six years earlier in these Angelus meditations. Minimally, it would influence my preparation; occasionally, it was so powerful I would just quote him directly.

Benedict provided us not only ideas and words, but also tone and emphasis. He taught us by example to preach about God and his glory and not just about moral duties, to proclaim the beautiful “Yes” of faith and not curse the darkness with a long list of prohibitions, and to announce the Good News of great joy based on God's love for us rather than scare, literally, the hell out of people.

This was not what many were expecting from “God's Rottweiler” when he assumed the papacy, which is perhaps why his example was even more influential.

Benedict also formed us liturgically. He had written and spoken so much about the liturgy prior to becoming pope that many believed liturgical directives and instruction would be among the major emphases of his pontificate. He did do some of this: for example, giving us in 2011 a new and improved English translation of the Mass.

For the most part, however, he led not by mandate but by example.

To help us and our people remember that God, rather than the community, must be at the center of our liturgical worship, he had a prominent crucifix placed at the front center of the altar so that both priest and people could focus on Christ in the Mass.

Many priests and I soon adopted the “Benedictine format” on our altars, with a large crucifix flanked by six candles.

To revive a genuine piety with regard to receiving Jesus in holy Communion, he began to distribute holy Communion only on the tongue to those kneeling, something that gave us priests an opportunity to make that piety and posture contagious among our people.

To help priests pray the Mass better — as well as to try to heal the only schism after Vatican II — he dramatically expanded access to the traditional Latin Mass. No priest can pray the extraordinary form of the

Mass without having it profoundly influence for the better how he celebrates every Mass.

More than anything, however, Benedict's greatest lesson to his brother priests will be his last: the example of the fundamental priority of prayer in priestly life.

Throughout his pontificate, Benedict stressed that prayer is the most important thing any of us does.

He told priests in Brindisi in 2008 that time spent in prayer “is the most important time in a priest's life, in which Divine grace acts with greater effectiveness, making his ministry fruitful. The first service to render to the community is prayer. And, therefore, time for prayer must be given a true priority in our life.”

To priests in Warsaw in 2006, he declared, “The faithful expect only one thing from priests: that they be specialists in promoting the encounter between man and God. The priest is not asked to be an expert in economics, construction or politics. He is expected to be an expert in the spiritual life,” someone who makes God his true priority, beginning with the way he spends his time.

By resigning the papacy in order to continue to serve the Church through a life dedicated to prayer, Benedict showed that he believes that prayer is basically even more important than the work of the papacy.

And if that's the case, then Benedict is reminding all priests that, even in the midst of a frenetic pastoral schedule, prayer is the most important thing we can do for God and others.

The greatest papal teacher and liturgist since Gregory the Great is making his last word the silent one of prayer. And he's doubtless praying that this lesson will have even more of an impact on the life of priests and the faithful than the doctrinal and liturgical treasure he has bequeathed to us, his priestly brothers, and to the whole Church.

Father Roger Landry is a priest in the Diocese of Fall River, Massachusetts. He is national chaplain of Catholic Voices USA. He will be providing commentary for EWTN during the upcoming papal conclave.

BY JAMES KELLY

Anglican Ordinariates: Ecumenism in Action

LONDON — Pope Benedict XVI pushed ecumenism far beyond mere dialogue in his efforts towards Christian unity.

According to many observers, that is the inescapable conclusion that is generated when examining the Pope's personal investment in the foundation of the ordinariates that are accommodating former Anglicans who come into the Catholic Church.

In 2011, the Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham was founded in England and Wales for the reception of Anglicans into full communion with the Catholic Church, while maintaining their distinctive Anglican patrimony. A year ago, the Ordinariate of the Chair of St. Peter was established in the U.S., while the Ordinariate of Our Lady of the South-

ern Cross was established in Australia last June.

Having made the accommodation of former Anglicans with their patrimony his personal project by enacting his 2009 apostolic constitution *Anglicanorum Coetibus*, Pope Benedict's actions in creating these foundations could prove to be a major lasting legacy of his pontificate.

This is a fact particularly recognized by the ordinary of the U.S. ordinariate, Msgr. Jeffrey Steenson. In a Feb. 11 statement, he commented that “members of the ordinariate are in a particular way the spiritual children of His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI.”

Msgr. Steenson noted that ever since Pope Benedict's time as prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine

of the Faith, “the reconciliation of Anglicans to the Catholic Church has been one of his principal tasks.”

Despite expressing sadness at the Pope's abdication, Msgr. Steenson said there is also “a deeper joy, knowing that we are the fruit of his vision for Catholic unity.”

Underlining the Pope's personal role in the ordinariates, Msgr. Steenson noted that, as a short-term consequence of his resignation, there could be a delay in ordinations to the groups (as the pope must personally approve these). But, he noted, “while the ordinariate has been a special intention of Pope Benedict, it is now firmly established in the Catholic Church and will continue to serve as an instrument for Christian unity.”

Msgr. Keith Newton, ordinary of

the Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham, told the Register that the Pope had played a vital personal role in the foundation of the communities. He said that he knew “some of the decisions concerning *Anglicanorum Coetibus* he took himself,” and he added that “the fact that I had a private audience with him soon after I was appointed was indicative of his interest.”

Msgr. Newton described the Pope's actions as “an ecumenical gesture.”

He continued, “Often, ecumenical dialogue is just that; there is much talk, but with little concrete to show. In the ordinariate, the Pope is showing, if in a small way, that the Church of Christ can be diverse, providing there is a common faith and all mem-

bers are in full communion. I think it is a small experiment in receptive ecumenism.”

Referencing *Summorum Pontificum*, Pope Benedict's 2007 *motu proprio* that authorized the Church-wide celebration of the Mass in its “extraordinary form” according to the 1962 Roman Missal, Msgr. Newton added, “I think *Summorum Pontificum* and *Anglicanorum Coetibus* are part of one vision of the Church.”

In September 2011, the then-prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, U.S. Cardinal William Levada, described the ordinariate as “the Pope's project.”

The results are bearing fruit. The Ordinariate of the Chair of St. Peter includes 36 communities, 30 priests and more than 1,600 people in the

United States and Canada. In an example of diversity in unity, Msgr. Steenson commended all ordinariate communities in North America to sing a solemn *Te Deum* of Thanksgiving on Feb. 22, the solemnity of the Chair of St. Peter, despite the prayer not usually being heard during Lent.

Blessed John Henry Newman, the famous 19th-century convert from the Anglican Church, has a special place in the hearts of those involved with the ordinariates.

Pope Benedict took an unusual step in personally celebrating the beatification Mass of the 19th-century convert and cardinal during his 2010 U.K. visit. That decision underlined his investment in the foundation of the ordinariates and the search for Christian unity that they represent.

James Kelly writes from London.

Jan. 23: The Pope launches the Vatican's YouTube channel.

Jan. 24: Benedict lifts the excommunication of four Society of St. Pius X bishops ordained against papal orders in 1988 by French Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre.

May 8-15: Holy Father goes on pilgrimage to the Holy Land.

Sept. 26-28: Pope visits the Czech Republic.

Nov. 4: The Pope issues the apostolic constitution *Anglicanorum Coetibus* authorizing the creation of ordinariates, which are similar to dioceses, for former Anglicans. It allows groups of Anglicans to come into the Catholic Church while retaining elements of the Anglican heritage and liturgical tradition.

April 17-18: The Pope travels to Malta; he celebrates his fifth anniversary as pope.

June 29: Benedict presides at first vespers in the Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls for the Solemnity of Sts. Peter and Paul, Apostles, officially marking the close of the Year of St. Paul. He travels to Cyprus.

Sept. 16-19: State visit to Great Britain; he publishes *Verbum Domini*, a post-synodal apostolic exhortation on the “Word of God in the Life and Mission of the Church.”

Nov. 6-7: Visit to Spain; one highlight: making a pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela to venerate the remains of St. James the Greater.

2009

January

March 16: Benedict announces a Year for Priests; 17-23: apostolic trip to Cameroon and Angola.

2010

June

June 29: Benedict releases his *Caritas in Veritate* (Charity in Truth) encyclical.

Oct. 4-25: Synod of Bishops on Africa.

December: Holy See establishes full diplomatic relations with Russia.

Celebrates Year of Priests.

January

Jan. 17: Benedict visits a Roman synagogue.

May

May 11-14: The Holy Father goes to Portugal; he establishes the Courtyard of the Gentiles to reach out to agnostics and atheists.

July

July 15: The Pope revises the Church's abuse norms; the revised rules, signed by the Holy Father May 21 and published in July, send a clear signal that the Church is “very, very serious” about protecting children and punishing abusive priests.

October

The Synod of Bishops on the Middle East is held; Oct. 12: The Pope creates the Pontifical Council for Promoting the New Evangelization.

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Gentle Shepherd Inspires the Nation

Benedict Encouraged America to Live for 'Christ, Our Hope'

BY PETER JESSERER SMITH

WASHINGTON — Five years after his pastoral visit to the United States, Benedict's presence continues to leave a mark on a Church that faces a rising tide of hostile secularism in American society.

For six days, between April 15-20, 2008, Benedict took up the "Pilgrim Pope" mantle of his predecessor Blessed John Paul II. Scores of thousands of Catholics — bishops, priests, laity and religious representing 195 dioceses — turned out to see the Holy Father as he made his stops in Washington and New York and to hear his inspirational vision of how the Church must engage American society with the Gospel message.

"The whole theme of the visit was 'Christ, Our Hope,'" Bishop Kevin Rhoades of the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, Ind., recalled. "He was calling us to live our faith in the public square and put into practice our beliefs in the world."

Bishop Rhoades, then the bishop of Harrisburg, Pa., recounted that Benedict's "warmth, gentleness and amazing teaching" banished American misperceptions of him as a hard-nosed "Panzer Pope."

Instead, he said, Benedict presented to the Church "the whole theme of the New Evangelization" and renewed the courage of the U.S. bishops in the face of increasing attacks on life, marriage and religious belief in the public square.

President George W. Bush personally greeted the Holy Father as he stepped off the plane April 15 at Andrews Air Force Base in Washington, where cheering crowds greeted him. The next day at the White House, the Pope praised the U.S. founding documents' recognition of "a moral order based on the dominion of God the Creator" and recalled George Washington's reminder to the nation in his 1794 farewell address that religion and morality are "indispensable supports" of its continued freedom.

The Challenge of Secularism

"The preservation of freedom calls for the cultivation of virtue, self-discipline, sacrifice for the common good and a sense of responsibility towards the less fortunate," Benedict said. "It also demands the courage to engage in civic life and to bring one's deepest beliefs and values to reasoned public debate."

The Pope later that day addressed the Church's bishops at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception and spoke about confronting the pastoral challenges of secularism, the "quiet apostasy" of Catholics leaving the faith and the decline in vocations.

Since that visit, however, Church-state relations in the United States have deteriorated sharply.

In the most significant current dispute, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops has joined with a variety of Catholic and other Christian organizations and businesses in a legal battle against the Obama



PAX TECUM. President George W. Bush shakes hands with Pope Benedict XVI during an arrival ceremony on the South Lawn of the White House, April 16, 2008. Mark Wilson/Getty Images

administration's Health and Human Services' mandate, which requires that organizations, including Catholic ones, provide for abortion-inducing drugs, contraception and sterilization to employees in their health-insurance plans.

"I never thought in 2008 that religious liberty would be under attack the way it is today," Bishop Rhoades said.

These subsequent events make the Pope's call in 2008 for Americans to uphold their nation's foundational commitment to religious liberty and to moral values even more relevant now, according to U.S. Catholic leaders.

"If people no longer believe in God, and if the social sciences have weakened the idea that humans have any inherent or permanent 'nature,'" Philadelphia Archbishop Charles Chaput said Feb. 27, "then words like 'freedom,' 'rights' and 'truth' don't really mean anything. They're just campaign slogans."

Campus Fidelity

Benedict's historic address to 400 Catholic university presidents and school superintendents on April 17 at Catholic University of America also set a new tone for Catholic education in America.

"This is the chief idea of Pope Benedict about higher education: It isn't our job just to provide information about God, but that the Catholic university should be a place where God is in our midst," John Garvey, president of The Catholic University of America, told Catholic News Agency.

Garvey said the Pope's address had "real, noticeable effects," with universities showing a "greater willingness" to embrace their Catholic identity and academics less suspicious toward the bishops.

Patrick Reilly, president of the Cardinal Newman Society, which ranks Catholic colleges and universities based on their fidelity to Church teaching, said Benedict would have been justified to call Catholic educators to account over "the current crisis in Catholic education."

"He chose instead to re-establish

a vision where what Catholic education ought to be (was central)," Reilly said.

Reilly said Benedict's positive appeal to Catholic educators moved the discussion beyond meeting only the most minimal requirements of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, Pope John Paul II's apostolic constitution for Catholic higher education, and reminded the educators that their mission "revolves around bringing young people to Christ."

Reilly noted positive improvements since the pastoral visit, such as the National Catholic School Standards developed by Loyola University in Chicago to promote Catholic identity in elementary and secondary schools.

Healing After Sex Abuse

Also on April 17, approximately 46,000 people joined U.S. cardinals, bishops and 1,300 priests for Benedict's opening Mass at Washington's Nationals Stadium, where he called for Catholics to "foster healing and reconciliation" in the wake of the sex-abuse scandal. The Pope would repeat this theme again at his Mass at St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York on April 19.

Benedict also had a private meeting with survivors of priestly sex abuse, accompanied by Cardinal Sean O'Malley of Boston, and apologized for the Church's failures.

"I told him then that he had a cancer in his flock that he needed to do something about," said Bernie McDaid, 57, who had been sexually abused by a now-deceased Boston priest at 12 years old.

The most heart-rending episode of Benedict's meeting with sex-abuse survivors came when a woman who was raped as a little girl by a priest rose to tell her story, McDaid said. But when she tried to speak, she burst forth in a wailing torrent of tears.

Catholic commentator and author Russell Shaw, a former spokesman for the U.S. bishops' conference, said the American Church has made "significant progress" against sexual abuse under Benedict. He said the pastoral visit "lent support to what the American

bishops have been trying to do since 2002 to remedy the situation and make sure it doesn't happen again."

"The incidence of sex abuse of minors by Catholic priests has gone way, way down in recent years," Shaw said. "While that's due to a number of factors, it is certainly the result of the policies and programs of child protection put in place in Catholic schools and churches for quite a few years now."

Interfaith Dialogue

The Pope also stressed the Church's solidarity with other people of faith during his visit. He spoke with 200 representatives of religions, including Judaism, Islam, Buddhism and Hinduism, at Catholic University's Pope John Paul II Cultural Center on April 18 before making a historic visit the next day to the Park East Synagogue in New York.

"Getting together on American soil, in the land of freedom and democracy, where all religious communities can live together in peace and harmony was a real affirmation of Pope Benedict to *Nostra Aetate* and the Second Vatican Council," Rabbi Arthur Schneier said.

Pope Benedict also addressed the U.N. General Assembly that day, urging them to reject efforts to reinterpret the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in ways that would exclude God and the natural law.

"It should never be necessary to deny God in order to enjoy one's rights," Benedict said.

Archbishop Chaput said the Pope's affirmation of the "religious dimension of human rights" was a reminder that individuals aren't "little godlings," but, instead, have "binding duties to God, each other and society."

Inspirational Farewell

On April 19, Pope Benedict arrived at St. Joseph's Seminary in Yonkers, N.Y., to lead a youth rally of 20,000, where he encouraged the young people and seminarians present to have confidence to follow Christ's call.

"I saw his gaze of love on each of us. It was very real," recalled Father Michael Roche, 34, a parochial vicar at St. Paul's Cathedral in downtown Pittsburgh.

The future priest and a group of fellow seminarians met with Benedict personally that day. "I've told people ever since: This guy loves you more than anyone you'll ever know, even though he's never met you and will never know your name," Father Roche said. "But he has just a truly real appreciation for your destiny."

The next day, the Pope bid farewell to the United States after visiting, praying at and blessing Ground Zero, the site of the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attack on the World Trade Center twin towers.

At his closing Mass before flying back to Rome, Pope Benedict urged the 60,000 Catholics packed into Yankee Stadium to live daily the words "thy Kingdom come" in the Lord's Prayer as a witness to hope.

"This prayer needs to shape the mind and heart of every Christian in this nation," the Pope said. "It needs to bear fruit in the way you lead your lives and in the way you build up your families and your communities. It needs to create new 'settings of hope' where God's Kingdom becomes present in all its saving power."

Peter Jesserer Smith writes from Rochester, New York. CNA contributed to this report.

Pope Benedict's 'Years'

On June 10, 2004, Pope John Paul II announced a special Year of the Eucharist, which would begin in October of that year and last until October 2005.

It was not the first special year that John Paul II proclaimed.

In fact, it followed close on the heels of the Year of the Rosary (2002-2003), which itself followed the multi-year cycle leading up to the Great Jubilee Year 2000.

Periodically, popes proclaim special, yearlong celebrations to mark important events in the life of the Church and to focus attention on particular aspects of the faith.

While the Year of the Eucharist was not John Paul II's first such year, it would be his last. He passed away in the midst of the celebration.

At the time, some thought it significant that he passed away during a year devoted to a theme so close to his heart.

When the new pope, Benedict XVI, was elected, he continued the celebration of the Year of the Eucharist, including events



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planned for it, such as a World Youth Day and a special Synod of Bishops on the Eucharist.

So while he had not proclaimed this year, Benedict XVI completed it.

In time, he called his own specially-themed years. The first of these was the Pauline Year, devoted to St. Paul. This year ran from June 2008 to June 2009. It was timed to coincide with the 2,000th anniversary of St. Paul's birth, which is generally placed between A.D. 7 and 10.

The year was intended to call attention to the life and teachings of St. Paul, who is obviously a very important figure for the Church.

Pope Benedict also had a surprise up his sleeve. At the close of the Pauline Year, he announced that scientific tests had been conducted that provided evidence that the traditional tomb of St. Paul — at the Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls — does indeed contain the mortal remains of the Apostle to the Gentiles.

It thus seems that we not only have the relics of St. Peter, but of St. Paul as well.

Pope Benedict next proclaimed a Year for Priests, which ran from June 2009 to June 2010. It was timed to coincide with the 150th anniversary of the death of St. John Vianney, the patron saint of priests.

This year was intended to strengthen the life and ministry of priests in the face of increasing pressures, including the awful sex-abuse scandals.

In a letter he wrote to priests, Pope Benedict explained that this year was "meant to deepen the commitment of all priests to interior renewal for the sake of a stronger and more incisive witness to the Gospel in today's world."

He also took the occasion to reflect "with heartfelt gratitude on the immense gift which priests represent, not only for the Church, but also for humanity itself. I think of all those priests who quietly present Christ's words and actions each day to the faithful and to the whole world, striving to be one with the Lord in their thoughts and their will, their sentiments and their style



of life. How can I not pay tribute to their apostolic labors, their tireless and hidden service, their universal charity? And how can I not praise the courageous fidelity of so many priests who, even amid difficulties and incomprehension, remain faithful to their vocation as 'friends of Christ,' whom he has called by name, chosen and sent?"

Although strengthening priestly life is an urgent priority in today's Church, it is not the only one. Another, even greater priority is addressing the present crisis of faith.

This is clearly a subject that is close to Pope Benedict's heart, and he has taken steps to address it, such as creating the Pontifical Council for Promoting New Evangelization in 2010.

It was no surprise then, when he proclaimed a Year of Faith, which began in October 2012 and which will conclude Nov. 24.

It coincides with the 20th anniversary of the Catechism of the Catholic Church and the 50th anniversary of Vatican II.

In January 2012, Pope Benedict told the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith: "In vast areas of the earth, faith risks being extinguished, like a flame that is no longer fed. We are facing a profound crisis of faith, a loss of the religious sense that constitutes the greatest challenge to the Church today. The renewal of faith must therefore take priority in the commitment of the entire Church in our time. I hope that the Year of Faith will contribute, with the cordial cooperation of all the members of the people of God, to making God present in this world once again."

Like 2005, the Year of Faith is a year in which the pope is scheduled to attend World Youth Day, and, again, it will close with a Synod of Bishops devoted to the year's theme (the promotion of the faith).

But Pope Benedict will not be the one to complete it. That task will fall to a new pope.

And thus there is an odd sense of history repeating itself. Pope Benedict was elected during a specially-themed year proclaimed by his predecessor on a subject very close to John Paul II's heart.

Now a new pope will find himself presiding over a specially-themed year proclaimed by Pope Benedict on a subject very close to his own heart.

It will be the new pope who goes to World Youth Day and who presides over a Synod of Bishops devoted to this year's theme.

One cannot help imagining how, as he contemplated his resignation, Pope Benedict saw these parallels to his own experience upon assuming the papacy.

In these parallels, he must have seen the Hand of Providence.

Jimmy Akin is a Register columnist and blogger and senior apologist at Catholic Answers. His blog is JimmyAkin.com.

<p>March 10: The Pope publishes Vol. 2 of <i>Jesus of Nazareth</i>.</p>	<p>June 4-5: The Holy Father travels to Croatia.</p>	<p>Sept. 22-25: The Pope goes to Germany.</p>	<p>Nov. 18-20: Benedict travels to Africa; he releases post-synodal apostolic exhortation <i>Africae Munus</i> on the "Church in Africa in Service to Reconciliation, Justice and Peace."</p>	<p>Nov. 27: The new Mass translation goes into effect in the U.S.</p>	<p>Feb. 18: Benedict appoints 22 new cardinals at fourth ordinary public consistory of his pontificate in St. Peter's Basilica.</p>	<p>Oct. 7: The Pope declares two new doctors of the Church: Sts. Hildegard of Bingen and John of Avila.</p>	<p>Oct. 11: The Year of Faith begins; also marks the 20th anniversary of the publication of the Catechism of the Catholic Church and the 50th anniversary of the start of Vatican II.</p>	<p>Oct. 21: Benedict canonizes American Sts. Kateri Tekakwitha and Marianne Cope.</p>	<p>Oct. 28: The Synod of Bishops on the New Evangelization is held.</p>	<p>Dec. 12: Benedict debuts on Twitter @pontifex.</p>
<p>2011</p> <p>May 1: Benedict beatifies John Paul II, saying, "Blessed are you, John Paul, because you believed."</p>	<p>May 16: The Vatican releases a letter on dealing with sexual abuse.</p>	<p>Aug. 18-21: Benedict celebrates World Youth Day in Madrid.</p>	<p>Oct. 16: Benedict starts using a wheeled platform at events.</p>	<p>Jan. 1: The Personal Ordinariate of the Chair of St. Peter is officially erected in the U.S. for former Anglicans.</p>	<p>March 23-29: The Holy Father travels to Mexico and Cuba, where he meets with Fidel Castro.</p>	<p>Nov. 24: A consistory creates Milwaukee native Archbishop James Harvey and five other non-European cardinals.</p>	<p>Feb. 11: The Holy Father announces his resignation.</p>	<p>Feb. 28: Benedict resigns.</p>	<p>2013</p> <p>Nov. 20: The Holy Father releases the third volume of <i>Jesus of Nazareth</i>.</p>	