

Cardinal Seán P. O'Malley released the following statement on the passing of Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI Dec. 31, 2022 The Pilot

Today a loving God called Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI home to his eternal reward for a lifetime of dedicated service to the Church. That service included 71 years as a priest, 28 years as a Cardinal, and nearly eight years leading the Catholic Church as the Bishop of Rome and Successor to St. Peter. His life and his pontificate were based in a deep and abiding faith and an extraordinary record of theological scholarship.

In the years leading to the Second Vatican Council and at the Council itself, Father Joseph Ratzinger made substantial contributions to the renewal of Catholic theology, and he played a significant role in the drafting of key conciliar documents. Pope John Paul II called Cardinal Ratzinger to Rome to serve as the Cardinal Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. In that role, he proved to be an invaluable contributor throughout the pontificate of his predecessor. Pope Benedict XVI's pontificate was characterized by broad and deep contributions to Catholic magisterial teaching.

In all of my personal interactions with Pope Benedict XVI, I found him to be an engaged leader, thoughtful in his decisions and always committed to the mission of the Church. I am very appreciative of the confidence he showed in me when he made me a Cardinal in 2006 and his ongoing support and pastoral care for the Archdiocese of Boston.

In February 2013, he stunned the world and the Church by becoming the first Pope to resign the office in nearly 600 years. At that time, I noted that he brought unique capabilities to the papacy. His fidelity to maintaining the truth and clarity of the Catholic faith, cultivating ecumenical and interfaith dialogue and reaching out to inspire the next generation of Catholics have been great gifts to us all.

Perhaps the most moving experience for me was accompanying survivors of clergy sexual abuse to a meeting with the Holy Father in Washington, D.C. during his 2008 pastoral visit to the United States. It was a great privilege for me to be present at this meeting, as the Holy Father, in very personal ways, demonstrated his deep pastoral care for the survivors. Pope Benedict XVI recognized the pain experienced by survivors and all persons impacted by the abuse crisis. He was then, and at all times remained, committed to the Church supporting their journey towards healing and doing all that was possible to ensure the protection of children, young people, and vulnerable adults.

I am particularly mindful in this Christmas season of God's unconditional love for all of us manifested by the Incarnation. I continue to pray for all of those in need that they may know His love and of our blessings upon them, Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI, Pope Francis and each of you.

I will miss Pope Benedict.

May his soul, and the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, Rest in Peace.