

Articles, Interviews, and Media Statements

Words on the occasion of Benedict XVI's resignation (February 11, 2013)

The Church feels today a special need to thank Benedict XVI for his rich and fruitful magisterium, and also for his humble and generous example of service to the Church and the world.

In this singular moment in the Church's history, the faithful of the Prelature—priests and laity—are praying for Benedict XVI and all his intentions. And united to the Pope and the entire Church, we are asking the Holy Spirit to pour out his grace in abundance on the people of God and its pastors.

In union with Benedict XVI we are invoking the Paraclete's help for the future Roman Pontiff.

✠ Bishop Javier Echevarría
Prelate of Opus Dei

"I will not leave you orphans," *ABC*, Spain (March 1, 2013)

"I will not leave you orphans" (Jn 14:18), Christ told his Apostles. He promised to send them the Holy Spirit, who would make them more fully children of God the Father. "I will not leave you orphans"—these words come to my mind at the end of this pontificate. Benedict XVI is not leaving us orphaned, because his magisterium, his teachings, still live; because he is with us in his prayer and fatherly love; because his likeness to the Good Shepherd becomes stronger every day; and, finally, because the Holy Spirit will continue to guide his Church through a new Pope.

Benedict XVI, in the rich body of his teachings, shows a quite extraordinary capacity to present profound truths in simple words. He took up the idea of the apparent "eclipse of God" to invite us to rediscover the meaning of God the Creator and Redeemer, who is always at work in our world.

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He reminded us forcefully of the fact that love is the essence of God and, therefore, the reason for man's existence and journey—a journey which, in this Year of Faith, finds a sure reference-point in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and its *Compendium*, fruits of the Second Vatican Council in which Cardinal Ratzinger also played his part. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* invites us to contemplate and experience the Church as the Communion of Saints, where none of the baptized feels unwanted and where we learn to practice charity in truth.

In the homily he gave for the inauguration of his pontificate, Benedict XVI invited us to travel towards close personal friendship with the Son of God, because everything else depends on that. God speaks to us and answers our questions; he never stops attending to us. I remember how, for the canonization of St. Josemaría, the then Cardinal Ratzinger unpacked the meaning of the term “Opus Dei”, the Work of God: the deep meaning of these words is that we let God act, because living as Christians mainly means wanting Christ's grace and charity to work in our own lives.

This also points to the depth of his reflections on the spirit of the liturgy, which express the close connection between the

Word and the Bread of the Eucharist, thus adding the essential dimension of adoration that lifts the whole question onto a higher plane and resolves so many arguments. Our sharing in the Eucharist is primarily interior, because in the liturgy God takes the initiative, not we; what we experience at Mass is “performative,” ever new, because there Christ transforms us.

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At the end of an exhausting day's work, one of Pope John Paul II's close collaborators once asked him not to do too much. His reply was, “After one Pope, comes another.” That is why, now too, we are serene and full of hope, in the hands of Our Lady, Mother of God and our Mother. The See of Peter will always be the source and foundation of the Church's unity, and a firm reference-point for the world. The Pope has taken his decision freely, after pondering it in prayer, for the good of the Church, and so we received the sad news with filial respect and love. Benedict XVI assures us that he will continue to help us with his prayer, a prayer on which all the sons and daughters of the Church can rely with full trust, as we have done during the years of his pontificate.

I thank God for the various occasions when Benedict XVI re-

ceived me as Prelate of Opus Dei. I am moved now as I remember his simplicity and availability, his warm welcome, his capacity for listening, and his keen interest in news of the Prelature's apostolic expansion. I experienced his attentiveness—that of a true university professor—when one spoke to him about intellectual-type projects, but equally, about works of service to the terminally sick, or people in other kinds of difficulties.

As can be seen in his filmed audiences, the Pope did not hesitate to take one of your hands between his own in a fatherly clasp when you were speaking to him, transmitting encouragement, love and support, attentively and patiently. He really was a father, who rejoiced intensely at the evangelization being done by Christians all over the world.

Some other words of Christ come spontaneously to my mind: “Now you are sad,” says Jesus as he comforts those whom he is about to leave, but, he prophesies, “your hearts will rejoice, and no-one will take your joy from you” (*Jn* 16:22). Following the invitation issued by Benedict XVI in his February 17 Angelus address, we are already praying for the next Pope. Do we feel like orphans? No! The Holy Spirit is acting in his Church right now. Another Peter will come, shouldering his nets, a new Bishop of Rome and a new Father for the family of God's children. And to

Pope Benedict XVI, who is about to pass on the helm of the boat of St. Peter to his successor, we say from the bottom of our hearts: “Thank you, Holy Father! Forgive us for the times we have ignored your calls as Good Shepherd! We beg you not to stop helping the whole People of God with the fruitfulness of your thought and prayers!”

Words on the Occasion of the election of Pope Francis (March 13, 2013)

This is a moment of great joy for Catholics all over the world. Pope Francis is the 265th successor of Peter. From the moment the white smoke was first seen we have welcomed him with great thanks. And now, following the example of Benedict XVI, we express to him our unconditional reverence and obedience. And also our affection and prayer, continuing the prayers that we shared with the Pope during his first appearance on the balcony of the Hall of Blessings in Saint Peter's Basilica.

In this moment filled with emotion, when the Church's universality is vividly sensed, I reaffirm to the new Roman Pontiff complete adhesion to his person