



OFFICE of the ARCHBISHOP

ARCHDIOCESE OF LOUISVILLE

Pastoral Center, 3940 Poplar Level Road, Louisville, KY 40213-1463
(502) 585-3291 | (502) 585-2466 (Fax) | archbp@archlou.org

Statement on the Death of Pope-Emeritus Benedict XVI

I join with Catholics around the world in grieving the death of Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI. His gentle demeanor, great intellect, and faithful leadership as our Holy Father for eight years were great gifts to the Church as were his 71 years as a priest, teacher, bishop, and cardinal.

We were all surprised at his decision to retire in 2013, a decision that reflected his deep humility. It is a manifestation of his servant leadership to recognize so gracefully what he believed was best for the Church at that time. For these last ten years, he has provided a prayerful and steady presence and support for Pope Francis, another legacy of his stewardship of his office. Of course, I am deeply grateful for his appointment of me as Auxiliary Bishop of New Orleans in 2006.

With Pope Francis, I pray for the repose of his soul. In 2021, Pope Benedict wrote to thank a priest in Germany who informed Pope Benedict about the death of a close friend. In this letter, Pope Benedict wrote about his departed friend, “Now he has reached the afterlife, where many friends certainly await him. I hope I can join them soon.” We can rejoice with Pope Benedict at the realization of this prayer as he joins the God he loved so deeply and as we thank and mourn this good and faithful servant of our Church.

Most Reverend Shelton J. Fabre
Archbishop of Louisville
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