



NEWS RELEASE

DIOCESE OF ERIE

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Statement from the Most Rev. Lawrence T. Persico, Bishop of Erie

This morning we learned of the death of Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI. May he rest in peace.

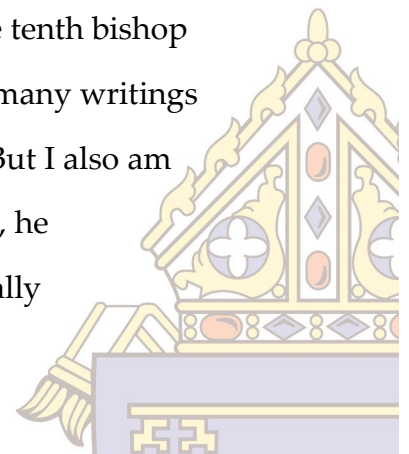
He was a true disciple of Christ who used the many gifts he had to serve the Catholic Church with great generosity. He made no secret of the fact that he had not expected to be elected to the papacy and that he, in fact, had hoped to live out his retirement in prayer and scholarly pursuit.

Yet upon his election, he accepted the new mission that was given to him. I feel a closeness to Pope Benedict since he is the one who appointed me as the tenth bishop of the Diocese of Erie. I am grateful for the appointment as well as the many writings he shared during his lifetime, including from his perspective as pope. But I also am grateful for the remarkable example he gave each of us. Even in his 80s, he continued to listen closely to what the Lord was asking of him, eventually

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surprising us all with the bold discernment in 2013 that it was time for him to retire.

In the coming days and weeks, much information and many reflections will be shared about Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI. I have already written to the clergy of the Diocese of Erie, asking them to pray and to offer a Mass for him. I encourage the religious and lay faithful of the Diocese of Erie, and indeed all who wish to remember and honor the emeritus pope, to offer prayers for him, for Pope Francis and for the church at this moment.

Eternal rest grant unto him, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon him. May he rest in peace. Amen.

Because this is the first time in over 600 years that the Catholic Church has experienced the death of a retired pope, details for the events leading up to the January 5 funeral of Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI will be shared as information becomes available. Later today, the Diocese of Erie website will launch a microsite at <https://www.eriecd.org/benedict.html>, with updates as information becomes available.