



WILLIAM T. MCGRATTAN

BISHOP *of* CALGARY

December 31, 2022

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ,

While we mourn the death of Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI, we do so with profound gratitude to God for the life of service exemplified by His faithful servant. At the general audience on Wednesday, Pope Francis invited the faithful to ask the Lord that the Pope Emeritus, “who in silence is supporting the Church” will be sustained “in this witness of love for the Church, until the end.” In this we see, that even in retirement, the Pope Emeritus demonstrated humility and obedience as that of a servant of Christ and His Church.

I will also remember with gratitude that it was during his pontificate that I received the call to the episcopacy. Shortly after my ordination I then had the privilege of meeting him in person where I received his fraternal encouragement and prayers in becoming a successor of the apostles. This will always leave a mark on my ministry as bishop.

Pope Benedict XVI will be remembered as one of the great theologians of our time and a prolific writer who published books in theology, gave many speeches that engaged his audiences intellectually and on broad range of topics, and issued three encyclicals that were received not only by Catholics but by people of many faiths and beliefs and within various sectors of society.

The significance of the contributions of Pope Benedict XVI to the Church and the world will continue to unfold over time as history is judged by future generations. The words he had written and spoken throughout his pontificate are rich in meaning and originated from deep spiritual and intellectual truths.

In his address to the youth who were gathered in Madrid for World Youth Day 2011, which was briefly interrupted by a rainstorm that had suddenly come to a full stop, Pope Benedict XVI resumed praising the youth for their strength which he described as “stronger than the rain.” He then exhorted them to be grounded in Christ, “may no adversity paralyze you. Be afraid neither of the world, nor of the future, nor of your weakness. The Lord has allowed you to live in this moment of history so that, by your faith, his name will continue to resound throughout the world.” These words seem to have been a personal reflection of his life in that while he had envisioned a quiet of life of retirement, he instead received the call

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from God in the later stages of his life to become the Vicar of Christ. His service as pope was his contribution to the ongoing plan of God for the Church.

In the words of the Collect for the Mass for the Dead, of a pope, we pray...

O God, who in your wondrous providence
chose your servant Pope-Emeritus Benedict XVI to preside over
your Church, grant, we pray,
that, having served as the Vicar of your son on earth,
he may be welcomed by him into eternal glory.
Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the holy spirit,
God, for ever and ever.

May he rest in peace.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "William T. McGrattan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a cross at the beginning.

+William T. McGrattan
Bishop of Calgary