

Church News Ireland



Image of the day – King Charles and church leaders pay tributes to Pope Benedict

Image of the day

King Charles praises former Pope Benedict XVI

King Charles has praised former Pope Benedict XVI's "constant efforts to promote peace and goodwill to all people" after his death aged 95.



The King expressed his "deep sadness" at Benedict's death in a message to his successor Pope Francis, and to the head of the Roman Catholic Church in England and Wales, Cardinal Vincent Nichols

Benedict became the second pontiff in history to visit the UK in 2010 when he met Queen Elizabeth and made a historic address at Westminster Hall.



He was the first pope in 600 years to resign and was replaced by Francis in 2013.

Francis will celebrate Benedict's funeral Mass in St Peter's Square in Vatican City on Thursday, the Vatican said.

In his statement, King Charles paid tribute to Benedict and recalled visiting him at the Vatican in 2009.

He said: "Your Holiness, I received the news of the death of your predecessor, Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI, with deep sadness.

"I remember with fondness my meeting with His Holiness during my visit to the Vatican in 2009. His visit to the United Kingdom in 2010 was important in strengthening the relations between the Holy See and the United Kingdom.

January 2, 2023

“I also recall his constant efforts to promote peace and goodwill to all people, and to strengthen the relationship between the global Anglican Communion and the Roman Catholic Church.”

The King also praised Benedict’s “landmark” trip in 2010 when he became the second pope in history to visit the UK, reminiscing about the German theologian meeting the Queen in Edinburgh and an address he made at Westminster Hall, for which “every living prime minister was present”.

Charles added: “I remember when the visit was being arranged, the whole expectation was the Pope would come to London but he said, ‘No, first of all I want to see the Queen’.

“And the Queen was in Balmoral, but she came to Edinburgh and he arrived in the United Kingdom in Edinburgh in order to make sure that his first visit and his first steps in the United Kingdom were with the Queen.

“Now, it’s worth remembering they’re the same age, the Queen died at 95, Pope Benedict has died at 95. And there was a great esteem between them, a deep respect.

“I was not far away from that first visit and there was not only respect but there was also a little bit of humour as well that the car that had been provided for the Pope to travel from Edinburgh Airport to Holyrood House Palace she thought was a bit small and it had darkened windows, and she said, ‘That won’t do, it’s got to be something which people can see you (in).

January 2, 2023

“The Queen and the Pope understood what it was to be in service more or less for a lifetime.”

Joseph Ratzinger was elected as the 265th pope on April 19th, 2005, aged 78, and chose the name Benedict.

Church leaders' condolences on the death of Pope Benedict XVI

The Archbishop of Canterbury



The Archbishop visited care homes at Christmas

Today I join with the church throughout the world, and especially with the Holy Father, Pope Francis, and all in the

January 2, 2023

Catholic Church, in mourning the death of Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI.

In Pope Benedict's long life and ministry of service to Christ in His Church he saw many profound changes in the church and in the world. He lived through the Nazi regime in Germany and served briefly in the Second World War. As a younger theologian and priest he witnessed first-hand the discussions of the Second Vatican Council. As a professor and then as an Archbishop he lived in a divided Germany but saw too the fall of the Berlin Wall and the reunification of his homeland.

“The Queen and the Pope understood what it was to be in service more or less for a lifetime.”

Pope Benedict was one of the greatest theologians of his age – committed to the faith of the Church and stalwart in its defence. In all things, not least in his writing and his preaching, he looked to Jesus Christ, the image of the invisible God. It was abundantly clear that Christ was the root of his thought and the basis of his prayer.

In 2013 Pope Benedict took the courageous and humble step to resign the papacy, the first Pope to do so since the fifteenth century. In making this choice freely he acknowledged the human frailty that affects us all. In his retirement in Rome he has led a life of prayer and now he has gone to the eternal rest granted by the Father. In his life and ministry Pope Benedict strove to direct people to Christ. May he now rest in Christ's peace, and rise in glory with all the Saints.

Archbishop John McDowell

‘I wish to extend my sympathy on behalf of the Church of Ireland to Archbishop Eamon Martin, and to the bishops, priests, deacons and Roman Catholic people of Ireland on the death of His Holiness Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI.

‘During his visit to the United Kingdom in 2010, Pope Benedict used the occasion of his meeting with the Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, to focus on the subject of ecumenism in the context of both greater secularism in wider society and the increasingly multi-faith pattern of belief. For those of us who were present on that occasion in Westminster Abbey, we were fortunate indeed to listen to two European intellectuals and people of deep faith in conversation about the future of European Christianity. It was an unforgettable and encouraging experience.

‘On that occasion, His Holiness Pope Benedict also reflected on the work of the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission saying: “Let us entrust the fruits of that work to the Lord of the harvest, confident that he will bless our friendship with further significant growth.”

‘We owe a common debt to him, not least as a Biblical scholar and the unique richness of his exploration of the person of Jesus.

‘In the encyclicals *Deus caritas est* (God is Love), *Spe salvi* (In Hope We Were Saved) and *Caritas in veritate* (Charity in Truth), Pope Benedict examined the themes of God’s love, hope and redemption, and the need for an ethical

January 2, 2023

perspective to achieve the common good in global development. As we look around today's world, these reflections are perhaps more pertinent than ever, filled with a sense of prescience and still calling for response.

'Pope Benedict was manifestly a man of deep spiritual insight combined with a capacity for focused and articulate theological expression. During his life, he combined the role of churchman and theologian with energy, leaving as a legacy a substantive body of published work that stands testament to a Christian scholar of great intelligence and learning.

'His loss will be felt very keenly throughout the Catholic world and my prayers in the coming weeks will be for all who are bereaved and diminished by the passing of a great man and a humble disciple of our common Lord, especially my brothers and sisters in Christ on the island of Ireland.

'Ar dheis Dé go raibh an anam.'

Rev David Nixon, President of the Methodist Church in Ireland

"Pope Benedict had a profound influence on the life of the Church. His life was deeply rooted in God, and in his teaching he encouraged all to a closer relationship with Jesus in their everyday lives. He was a man of prayer and an insightful theologian. We pray for comfort for all who mourn his loss"

Right Reverend Dr John Kirkpatrick, Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland

Many people across the island of Ireland today will be greatly saddened by the news of the death of Pope Emeritus Benedict. In making contact with Archbishop Eamon I wanted to pass on my sympathy and express the condolences of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland as we acknowledge the grief being felt by so many of our Roman Catholic neighbours at this particular time.”

Archbishop Michael Jackson

‘Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI contributed to the life and understanding of the Christian Church in a very wide range of ways. Different people will remember this extraordinary personal contribution from many different perspectives and in many different contexts.

‘His gift of scholarship was one which he shared throughout his pontificate and after his retirement. Clarity of writing was a special charism and he opened up for a new generation the person of Jesus Christ.

‘Throughout his ministry he saw himself as a child of God and as a servant of the Church. Such service he offered generously to all who follow Jesus Christ in their own tradition and ecumenically. May he rest in peace and rise in glory.’

Quiet academic didn't want to run the Church

Pope Benedict stunned the world on February 11 2013 when he announced that he no longer had the strength to run the 1.2 billion-strong Catholic Church that he had steered for eight years through scandal and indifference.

His dramatic decision paved the way for the conclave that elected Pope Francis as his successor.

The two popes then lived side-by-side in the Vatican gardens, an unprecedented arrangement that set the stage for future “popes emeritus” to do the same.

The former Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger had never wanted to be pope, planning at age 78 to spend his final years writing in the “peace and quiet” of his native Bavaria.

Instead, he was forced to follow the footsteps of the beloved St John Paul II and run the church through the fallout of the clerical sex abuse scandal and then a second scandal that erupted when his own butler stole his personal papers and gave them to a journalist.

Being elected pope, he once said, felt like a “guillotine” had come down on him.

Nevertheless, he set about the job with a single-minded vision to rekindle the faith in a world that, he frequently lamented, seemed to think it could do without God.

“In vast areas of the world today, there is a strange forgetfulness of God,” he told one million young people gathered on a vast field for his first foreign trip as pope, to World Youth Day in Cologne, Germany, in 2005. “It seems as if everything would be just the same even without him.”

With some decisive, often controversial moves, he tried to remind Europe of its Christian heritage. And he set the Catholic Church on a conservative, tradition-minded path that often alienated progressives.

He relaxed the restrictions on celebrating the old Latin Mass and launched a crackdown on American nuns, insisting that the church stay true to its doctrine and traditions in the face of a changing world. It was a path that in many ways was reversed by his successor, Francis, whose mercy-over-morals priorities alienated the traditionalists who had been so indulged by Benedict.

Benedict's style could not have been more different from that of John Paul or Francis. He was a teacher, theologian and academic to the core: quiet and pensive with a fierce mind.

He had a weakness for orange Fanta as well as his beloved library; when he was elected pope, he had his entire study moved from his apartment just outside the Vatican walls into the Apostolic Palace. The books followed him to his retirement home.

News reports



Church people acknowledged in New Year's Honours list

The Reverend Matthew Henry Hagan (above), Chaplain to the Southern Area Hospice and Rector of Tynan, Aghavilly and Middletown Parishes, County Armagh was awarded MBE for services to Hospice Healthcare and to the community in Northern Ireland.



Dr John Edmund Stannard - Legal Academic, at Queen's University Belfast City of awarded an OBE for services to Legal Education. He is a member of Stranmillis Parish.

Rev David Kale, Rabbi at Belfast Synagogue, was awarded an MBE for services to the Jewish community in Northern Ireland. Delighted to see this.

In the Diocese of Derry and Raphoe two of its parish stalwarts have been recognised -

Mr William Oliver – one of the Diocese’s five Honorary Secretaries and an active member of the Castlerock and Dunboe church family – has been awarded an M.B.E. for “services to education, to business and to charities in County Londonderry”. William’s service to his local churches on the north coast, and to the wider diocese, and indeed to the Church of Ireland centrally, are appreciated greatly. He is a Deputy Lieutenant for County Londonderry.

January 2, 2023

Likewise, **Mr Samuel Godfrey Young**, who serves as a member of St Columba's Church's Select Vestry in Omagh, has been awarded an M.B.E. for "services to social work and to education". Godfrey has worked in many voluntary capacities, to improve services and outcomes for young people across the west and further afield. He has made a significant contribution to Safeguarding at parish and diocesan level, and has been a long and faithful member of the St Columba's Church Choir.

Derek and Raye Greenaway from 1st Milltown Boys' Brigade were honoured in the New Year Honours.

Northern Ireland International Organ Competition reflects on 10th anniversary

In a New Year's greeting the organisers of the Northern Ireland International Organ Competition wished all of their partners, sponsors, organists and friends a very happy and rewarding 2023.

The greeting continued - 2022 has been an exceptional year for us, celebrating our 10th anniversary with events in London and all across Northern Ireland. These featured our 10 Senior winners from Lithuania, Hungary, Germany and the UK. We are indebted to everyone who contributed to its success financially, logistically and musically.

The world's leading organ competition for players aged 21 and under will return to Armagh 21-23 August with all live categories, masterclasses and workshops. Full details will be released in early 2023.

In the meantime, do enjoy this short summary of 2022 and a photo gallery at www.niic.com/10th-birthday

Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts, and books

Best selling books of 2022

- compiled by Richard of The Book Well

Thanks to everyone who has supported us this year in whatever way possible. Thanks to you, these are the top 20 books within Christian Living that have sold well over the year. A real mix of brand new to absolute classics, and a good few local authors included as well. Happy New Year to you all. We're back open from Thursday 5th January 2023

1. Emotionally Healthy Spirituality Day by Day- Peter Scazzero
2. Deep Roots for Resilient Disciples- Rick Hill
3. The Crucible of Leadership- Alan Wilson
4. How to Hear God- Pete Greig
5. Praying Like Monks- Tyler Staton
6. A Long Obedience in the Same Direction- Eugene Peterson
7. Live no Lies- John Mark Comer
- =8. Reappearing Church- Mark Sayers
- =8. Jesus Calling- Sarah Young

January 2, 2023

- 10. Paul Distilled- Gary Burnett
- 11. God Isn't Finished With You Yet- Catherine Campbell
- =12. Gentle and Lowly- Dane Ortlund
- =12. Sensible Shoes- Sharon Garlough Brown
- =14. With all your Mind- Erin Burnett
- =14. Gold- Nichola Neal
- =14. Transforming Discipleship- Greg Ogden
- =14. The Air I Breathe- Glen Scrivener
- 18. Help is Here- Max Lucado
- 19. God on Mute- Pete Greig
- 20. Digging for Diamonds- Cathy Madavan

The Book Well, 27 Belmont Road, Belfast, BT4 2AA
[<https://www.thebookwell.co.uk/>]

Poem for today

1819 New Year's Carrier's Address – By Major Henry Livingston, Jr

Believe me, dear patrons, I have wand'ered too far,
Without any compass, or planet or star;
My dear native village I scarcely can see
So I'll hie to my hive like the tempest-tost bee.

Hail home! sacred home! to my soul ever dear;
Abroad may be wonders but rapture is here.
My future ambition will never soar higher
Than the clean brushed hearth and convivial fire;
Here I lounge at my pleasure, and bask at my ease,

January 2, 2023

Full readily sooth'd, and desirous to please,
As happy myself as I happy can be,
I wish all the circle as happy as me.

But hark what a clatter! the Jolly bells ringing,
The lads and the lasses so jovially singing,
Tis New-Years they shout and then haul me along
In the midst of their merry-make Juvenile throng;
But I burst from their grasp: unforgetful of duty
To first pay obeisance to wisdom and Beauty,



January 2, 2023

My conscience and int'rest unite to command it,
And you, my kind patrons, deserve & demand it.

On your patience to trespass no longer I dare,
So bowing, I wish you a Happy New Year.

Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

Church News Ireland

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