



# Boston Catholic Journal



NIHIL NISI JESUM

DEDICATED TO MARY, MOTHER OF GOD

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## he Greatest Pope that should have Been



**Pope Benedict died this morning at 9:34 A.M (CET) December 31st, 2022.**

**Please pray for him** in the Communion of Saints in which we, as Catholics, live our lives in Christ.

Pope Benedict was undoubtedly one of the great intellects and luminaries of our age — a brilliant mind only exceeded by his genuine humility. He embraced *all* his children ... in stark contrast to Francis who embraces only those who find favor with him, who share his ... ideology.

In this sense Pope Benedict XVI was a father to all his spiritual children. Gentle, kind, and courteous in a way foreign to this age; in this respect he was an exemplar to all of us.

This is not to say that his pontificate was flawless. On the one hand, he gave us the *motus proprio* [\*Summorum Pontificum\*](#) that restored to us the Mass of the Ages as it had been celebrated in Latin for 2000 years. That it had been *torn from us* in a fiat by Pope Paul VI and Vatican II was, in our estimation, tantamount to ecclesiastical suicide; if not, then at the very least a criminal and sectarian coup by Modernists.

## **Summorum Pontificum**

Restoring what had been illegitimately taken from us was *an act of justice*. That it would later be torn from us *yet again* by Bergoglio (Francis) was an

unconscionable act of pontifical pillage. It was unjust and remains unjust. But after the madness and the almost universal desecration of all things historically and intrinsically Catholic, it was for a brief time the restoration of sanity to the Mass. And how it thrived! But this was to the consternation of Francis ... who famously argued that his predecessors had failed to vigorously implement the “effluence” (no, not *influence*) of Vatican II, and that he alone “[had the humility and ambition to do so](#)” — failing to recognize that humility and ambition are not compatible.

The gift was great but not irrevocable.

What is more, Pope Benedict had fallen into the same ecumenical nonsense that his predecessor, Pope John Paul II, had fallen into on Oct. 27, 1986, as we witnessed, yet again, the pan-ecumenical scandal in [Assisi on June 19, 2011](#).

## **Resignation**

Two years later, we would be astounded to find that Pope Benedict had tendered his resignation from the papacy on February 11, 2013, and his subsequent — and never-before-conferred title as “pope-emeritus” — was [both baffling and disheartening for many, many Catholics](#). To further confuse the faithful, he was still addressed as “Your Holiness”, the title reserved for a reigning pontiff. For the first time in history since the *Avignon papacy* and the *Great Western Schism* in the 14th century when there were two claimants to the papacy, we apparently had two popes living in Rome. The confusion and disappointment was compounded each year — for 10 years — by Benedict’s remaining a “pope-emeritus”; time he *could*

have spent correcting the wayward course of the Church instead of abandoning it (and her children) to what he surely must have known would be a Modernist successor. And when that successor — Francis — emerged from the shadows of the dark logia there was, according to more than a few who witnessed it, an almost instinctual aversion to what appeared.

After many, many, episodes in which Francis found himself contradicting historical Church teaching — and Holy Scripture — and subsequently bringing scandal upon the Church, Benedict apparently did nothing to correct him; something many had seen as a dereliction of duty, especially in light of Saint Paul’s example in correcting Saint Peter when he failed to be forthright, and temporized with the Jews in Jerusalem <sup>1</sup>. The only other pope in history to voluntarily abdicate the Seat of Saint Peter was Pope Celestine V in 1294, over 700 years ago. In a word, it was unthinkable —and apart from Pope Celestine, unheard of.

Many see it, in some sense, as “Throwing the Church to the Lions” when she was most in need of defending. Pope Benedict certainly had the mental acuity, and, as we have seen, the physical stamina required by a *Defensor Fidei* (a Defender of the Faith) but for reasons unknown to us, chose drop the sword and leave the arena.

## **Francis and Fixation, the denouement**

That his reckless successor (Francis/Jorge Bergoglio) deliberately disdains to be called “the Vicar of Christ” — or even the “Patriarch of the West,” says much

about the concept of the “hermeneutic of continuity” so often bandied about in today’s post-Modern Church. Instead, Jorge chose to be listed merely as “the bishop of Rome” (in what Cardinal Gerhard Müller, called an act of “theological barbarism.”) in what is known as the *Annuario Pontificio*, as [Catholic Culture](#) points out. He eschews every identifiably Catholic title attached to all his predecessors, including “Successor of the Prince of the Apostles, Supreme Pontiff of the Universal Church, Primate of Italy, Archbishop and Metropolitan of the Roman province, Sovereign of the Vatican City-State.” Why such a disdainful break with the pontifical history of the 265 popes before him? The Vatican’s explanation is entirely in keeping with the present papacy, and the four papacies that preceded it? In their words, doing so “**could prove useful to ecumenical dialogue.**” The much-vaunted notion of the concept of the “hermeneutic of continuity” (which purportedly connects the Church *present* with the Church *past* — and failed to do so) is, apparently, no longer in favor. “The pope? Oh, you mean the guy down the street?” It has become barbaric, indeed.

It may have been otherwise for the Church, but God in His inscrutable wisdom — which does, in fact, exceed our understanding — in His permissive will has allowed this. Even from a merely human perspective, we are deserving of Francis, a man after our own hearts and minds, ever cleaving more closely to the world ... and other things. We wanted holiness without sacrifice, a god conformed to our image and articulated in terms of the lowest common denominator — terms equally accessible to children and adults with cognitive impairment. We have dumbed down even Dumb. We wanted to sit in the pews with our arms lazily draped over the the back of the pew (or perhaps stroking the back of a loved one) as though only *tolerating* what was otherwise extraordinarily stupefying — because it was. We wanted to wear our athletic uniforms, our team-shirts, our

shorts and “distressed” (torn-to-the-flesh) jeans to Mass because, after all, we are not there for God, but God is there for us ... and only at our leisure.

All this was a direct consequence of the perilous course that Vatican II would subsequently take; a course for which — in collaboration with the dissident theologians Rahner, Küng, Schillebeeckx, and de Lubac — then Father Ratzinger was also responsible as an influential and “progressive” *Peritus*, or Theological Consultant. Often in a business suit and tie, in many ways he embodied the *Nouvelle Theologie* (new theology) together with the failed project, *Ressourcement* (“a return to the sources”) then in vogue, which attempted to “invigorate” what all five theologians saw as a stale Church in need of “updating.”

## **The *Peritus* as (Mr.) Ratzinger, Vatican II**



Dissident Theologian (Fr.) Karl Rahner and (Fr.) Ratzinger

On the other hand, it was also *entirely consistent with Benedict's own contribution to the replacement of the Latin Mass* during Vatican II. This may come as a surprise to many who saw in Pope Benedict a champion of the "Tridentine Mass" and Tradition. Regrettably, he was not. Indeed, in 1967 Ratzinger wrote the following in his volume *Problemi e risultati del Concilio Vaticano II* in the Journal of Italian Theology: <sup>2</sup>

- "Additions [to the liturgy] of the late Middle Ages ... was linked to a set authority, which worked in a strictly bureaucratic way, *lacking any historic vision and considering the problem of the liturgy from the sole viewpoint of rubrics and ceremonies, like a problem of etiquette in a saint's court*, so to speak."
- "There was a complete archeologization of the liturgy, which from the state of a living history was changed into that of pure conservation and, therefore, *condemned to an internal death. Liturgy became once and forever a closed construction, firmly petrified*. The more it was concerned about the integrity of pre-existent formulas, the more it lost its connection to concrete devotions."
- "The solemn baroque mass, through the splendor of the orchestra's performance, *became a kind of sacred opera, in which the songs of the priest had their role as did the alternating recitals*. .... On the ordinary days that did not allow *such a performance*, devotions that followed the people's mentality were often added to the mass."

By the time he became pope, however, and well into the aftermath of Vatican II, he apparently glimpsed the devastation it wrought — but by then the horse was already out of the barn; indeed, as we have recounted, he had been instrumental, much earlier, in building the barn and opening the door.

In many ways, Joseph Ratzinger was the surpassing and ultimately heroic pope ... that *should have* been.

*Requiem aeternam dona ei Domine, et lux perpetua luceat ei.*

*Amen*

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