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# Seattle archbishop sets Mass of thanksgiving in honor of Pope Benedict XVI

Dan Morris-Young | Feb. 26, 2013 NCR Today
Benedict Resigns

Seattle Archbishop J. Peter Sartain will celebrate a Mass of thanksgiving on Thursday, the scheduled final day of Pope Benedict XVI?s pontificate, at 12:10 p.m. in St. James Cathedral, according to an archdiocesan media release Tuesday.

?As Pope Benedict?s pontificate draws to a close,? the statement said, ?Archbishop Sartain has asked that a Mass of thanksgiving for the Holy Father be celebrated in each parish throughout the Archdiocese of Seattle, and that all Catholics pray for the pope, his successor and for the guidance of the Holy Spirit during this time of transition.?

On the day the papal resignation was announced, Feb. 11, Sartain said he ?received the news ... with strongly mixed feelings.?

Describing the pope as ?no stranger to challenge,? Sartain noted that the pope grew up ?in Germany during the Nazi scourge,? advised ?the council fathers during the Second Vatican Council,? oversaw the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith during the pontificate of Blessed Pope John Paul II, and finally assumed the role of supreme pontiff himself.

?Having had the opportunity to meet him on several occasions, I have always been struck by his humility and kindness,? Sartain wrote. ?A brilliant theologian, he is also a caring pastor who looks one straight in the eye and listens carefully.?

Added Sartain: ?A prolific writer even before his election as pope, he has continued to teach clearly with his encyclicals and books. As pastor of the universal Church, he has reminded us particularly of the truth that faith must issue forth in love, and thus that not only individual Christians but the Church herself must reach out to those who suffer around the world.?

In April 2012, the Vatican appointed Sartain head of a trio of bishops to oversee reform of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious, the organization that represents almost four out of five U.S. women religious.

In an assessment issued at that time, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith questioned LCWR fidelity to church teaching in areas including abortion, euthanasia, women's ordination and homosexuality. The report has met strong criticism and generated protest in many quarters of the U.S. Catholic community.

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