Vatican
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Pope Benedict XVI poses in Alpeggio Pileo near his summer residence in Les Combes, at the V

Pope Benedict XVI poses in Alpeggio Pileo near his summer residence in Les Combes, at the Valle d'Aosta in northern Italy, July 14, 2005. Pope Benedict died Dec. 31, 2022, at the age of 95 in his residence at the Vatican. (CNS photo/Reuters/Vatican Pool)



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Following the death of retired Pope Benedict XVI on Dec. 31, the Vatican has announced the following arrangements:

- Pope Francis will preside over the funeral of retired Pope Benedict XVI at 9:30 a.m. (Rome time) on Jan. 5, 2023, in St. Peter's Square.
- Vatican spokesperson Matteo Bruni said the funeral will take place with "simplicity," as requested by the retired pope.
- His body will rest in St. Peter's Basilica, beginning Monday, Jan. 2, 2023, for prayers and final viewings. He will be on display from 9am-7pm on Monday and 7am-7pm on Tuesday, Jan. 4 and Wednesday, Jan. 5.

- The retired pope received the anointing of the sick on the afternoon of Dec. 28 at the Mater Ecclesiae monastery, where he resided inside the Vatican.
- Pope Francis will continue with his previously scheduled plans to preside over the end of year Te Deum prayer service on Dec. 31 (5:00 p.m. Rome time) in St. Peter's Basilica.
- In his first public remarks since retired Pope Benedict XVI's death on Dec. 31, Pope Francis praised the late pope's kindness and sacrifice, saying Catholics around the world should be grateful for the example he set, both as pope and in retirement.
- During his Sunday Angelus on Jan. 1, Pope Francis again paid tribute to the late pope, saying: "Let us all join together, with one heart and one soul, in thanking God for the gift of this faithful servant of the Gospel and of the church."
- On Jan. 1, the director of the Holy See Press Office confirmed that immediately after the death of Benedict XVI, Pope Francis visited the Vatican monastery where he resided to offer prayers and condolences to the late pope's staff.
- The Vatican has published the late pope's last spiritual testament, where he offered a final defense of faith and reason:
    - "I say now to all those in the church who have been entrusted to my service: stand firm in the faith! Do not let yourselves be confused! It often seems that the science - the natural sciences on the one hand and historical research (especially exegesis of Sacred Scripture) on the other — are able to offer irrefutable results contrary to the Catholic faith," he wrote. "I have experienced the transformations of the natural sciences since ancient times and have been able to witnessed how, on the contrary, apparent certainties against the faith have vanished, proving to be not science, but philosophical interpretations only apparently pertaining to science; just as, on the other hand, it is in dialogue with the natural sciences that even faith has learned to understand better the limit of the scope of its claims, and thus its specificity. It is now 60 years that I have been accompanying the path of Theology, particularly of Biblical Sciences, and with the succession of different generations I have seen theses that seemed unshakable collapse, proving to be mere assumptions: the liberal generation (Harnack, Jülicher, etc.), the existentialist generation (Bultmann etc.), the Marxist generation. I have seen and I see how from the tangle of assumptions emerged and emerges again the reasonableness of faith. Jesus Christ is truly the way, the truth and the life — and the Church, with all its insufficiencies, is truly His body."

- U.S. President Joe Biden issued a statement saying the late pope "will be remembered as a renowned theologian, with a lifetime of devotion to the church, guided by his principles and faith...May his focus on the ministry of charity continue to be an inspiration to us all."
- Around the world, Catholic, Protestant and Jewish leaders paid tribute to the former pope:
    - Archbishop Timothy Broglio, head of the U.S. bishops' conference, issued a statement, saying: "It will take many years for us to delve more deeply into the wealth of learning that he has left us."
    - Bishop Georg Bätzing, head of the German bishops' conference, described him as "an impressive theologian and experienced shepherd."
    - Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, said, "Pope Benedict was one of the greatest theologians of his age–committed to the faith of the Church and stalwart in its defense. In all things, not least in his writing and his preaching, he looked to Jesus Christ."
    - The World Jewish Congress President Ronald Lauder said, "No pope before him visited as many synagogues, and he made a point of meeting with local Jewish community representatives whenever he visited foreign nations."
    - The World Council of Churches said: Benedict was also the first pope to have belonged to a committee of the World Council of Churches, as one of the Catholic members of its Faith and Order Commission. "Within a short time of Benedict becoming pope, longstanding grievances that had prevented meetings of the Catholic-Orthodox dialogue commission were swept aside," the statement said.
- Catholic advocacy groups weighed in with mixed reactions:
    - Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests (SNAP) said: "Benedict's legacy as pope was already tainted by the global deluge of the sex abuse scandal in 2010, even though as a cardinal, he was responsible for changing the Vatican's stance on the issue. To us, Benedict XVI, the church's successor to St. Peter, fell off the rock and was implicated in the most notorious scandal in the history of the church."
    - DIGNITY USA said: "Benedict's leadership in the church, as Pope and before that as head of the Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF), caused tremendous damage to LGBTQIA+ people and our loved ones. His words and writings forced our community out of Catholic churches, tore families apart, silenced our supporters, and even cost lives.

- Women's Ordination Worldwide: "We lament the fact that Pope Benedict died without apologizing for silencing his fellow theologians and women's ordination campaigners who dared to question his increasingly extreme positions on women’s ordained ministry."

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