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Woman knocks down pope at Christmas service, pontiff unharmed

by Thomas C. Fox

NCR Today

A woman jumped a barrier at the start of Christmas Eve Mass at St. Peter's Basilica and knocked down the pope, briefly disrupting ceremonies.

Screams erupted from onlooking worshippers when the woman ran toward Pope Benedict XVI and grabbed onto his vestments as he walked down the main aisle of the church, video footage showed.

He was quickly helped to his feet by his aides -- prompting cheers from the crowd -- and the service was resumed, Vatican spokesman Federico Lombardi told CNN.

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