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Benedict: 'Pope of Ironies'

by John L. Allen Jr.

All Things Catholic

Some years ago, after a speech he delivered in Paris drew a bit of negative reaction, then-Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger told friends he wasn't worried. "I'm like the cellist Rostropovich," he joked. "I never read the critics."

That's a policy Benedict XVI might want to preserve over the next few days, marking both his 83rd birthday today and the five-year anniversary of his papacy on Monday after a brief weekend stop in Malta. Especially in light of recent events, even the best reviews the pope's likely to draw as these milestones roll by seem certain to be mixed.

Read Allen's full column here: [Can a teaching pope get his house in order?](#)

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