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'Return to me with all your heart'

by Thomas C. Fox

NCR Today

Benedict Resigns

Full text of Pope Benedict's Ash Wednesday homily.

Today, Ash Wednesday, we begin a new Lenten journey, a journey that extends over forty days and leads us towards the joy of Easter, to victory of Life over death. Following the ancient Roman tradition of Lenten stations, we are gathered for the celebration of the Holy Eucharist. The tradition says that the first station took place in the Basilica of Saint Sabina on the Aventine Hill. Circumstances suggested we gather in St. Peter's Basilica.

Tonight there are many of us gathered around the tomb of the Apostle Peter, to also ask him to pray for the path of the Church going forward at this particular moment in time, to renew our faith in the Supreme Pastor, Christ the Lord. For me it is also a good opportunity to thank everyone, especially the faithful of the Diocese of Rome, as I prepare to conclude the Petrine ministry, and I ask you for a special remembrance in your prayer.

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