

Wisdom and Pope Benedict's retirement choices

Thomas C. Fox | Feb. 26, 2013 NCR Today

The story is told that when [Jesuit Fr. Peter Hans Kolvenbach](#) [1] was set to step down as 29th superior general of the Jesuit order, he was asked what work he would do next.

His answer: "Whatever the next superior general tells me."

I thought of this after learning today that [Pope Benedict has decided](#) [2] he will be called "His Holiness Benedict XVI, Roman pontiff emeritus," starting 8 p.m. Thursday Rome time, when he leaves his office. Benedict has also decided he will continue to wear a white cassock, though he will no longer be seen in red shoes.

Alas, brown shoes.

So it seems we will have two white-cassocked prelates inside Vatican walls. Whatever signal this sends out -- in my opinion, not a good one -- it does not seem to be a wise gesture.

There seems to have been more wisdom in Kolvenbach's approach to retirement.

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Links:

[1] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peter_Hans_Kolvenbach

[2] <http://ncronline.org/blogs/ncr-today/pope-gets-retirement-title-focusing-prayer>