

Published on *National Catholic Reporter* (<https://www.ncronline.org>)

February 26, 2013 at 10:28pm

A somber St. Peter's Square

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NCR Today

Benedict Resigns

The square outside St. Peter's Basilica was busy the night of Feb. 26. Crews were setting up chairs, barricades, cameras and lights in anticipation of the final general audience of Pope Benedict XVI. Amid the hubbub, pilgrims and visitors milled quietly on the square, giving the scene a somber dignity. Standing in the square in the early evening, one could see lights burning brightly in the papal apartment, leading to the question: what occupies Benedict's minds on his nights.

According to Jesuit Fr. Federico Lombardi, the Vatican spokesman, Benedict is focusing on prayer these days.

Tomorrow, Wednesday, is his last public appearance. Thursday is his last day in office. And then retirement.

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