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Pope Francis' first encyclical to be published July 5

by Francis X. Rocca by Catholic News Service

Vatican City — Pope Francis' first encyclical, which he has said is largely the work of retired Pope Benedict XVI, will be published Friday.

The Vatican announced Monday that "Lumen fidei" (The Light of Faith) will be presented at a news conference featuring Cardinal Marc Ouellet, prefect of the Congregation of Bishops; Archbishop Gerhard Ludwig Muller, prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith; and Archbishop Rino Fisichella, president of the Pontifical Council for Promoting the New Evangelization.

An encyclical on faith was long expected as the last volume in Pope Benedict's trilogy on the three "theological virtues," following his encyclicals "Deus Caritas Est" (2005) on charity, and "Spe Salvi" (2007) on hope.

In June, Pope Francis told bishops meeting in Rome that his first encyclical would be largely the work of his predecessor.

"It's an encyclical written with four hands, so to speak, because Pope Benedict began writing it and he gave it to me," Pope Francis said. "It's a strong document. I will say in it that I received it and most of the work was done by him and I completed it."

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