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Benedict on Francis

Michael Sean Winters | Aug. 22, 2013 Distinctly Catholic

Vatican Insider reports [1] that Pope Emeritus Benedict recently told a visiting friend that he resigned, "Because God told me to." The resignation was, of course, an act of great spiritual freedom: There are not many people in the history of the human race who willingly lay down power. Clearly, in prayer, Benedict felt the Lord was calling him to a different ministry, a ministry of prayer. But, what really jumps out from this report is that Benedict said witnessing the charism of his successor only confirms him in his belief that the resignation was "the will of God." Benedict is a very astute person and a holy person. A lesser person might begrudge a successor whose charisms are more obvious, whose charisma is more accessible, but not Benedict. He is not complaining. He is, instead, permitting him that deepest of human joys, the confidence that we have done the Lord's will. Everything about Benedict's post-resignation time has been marked by graciousness and an awareness that he is setting precedent. He has not allowed a "rival" mentality to sink in. He has not criticized. There is much to admire in the life of Josef Ratzinger and much to admire in the papacy of Benedict XVI. But, he may best be known by Clio for these last months, and it is a good way to be known.

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[1] http://vaticaninsider.lastampa.it/en/the-vatican/detail/articolo/benedetto-xvi-benedicto-xvi-benedict-xvi-27273/