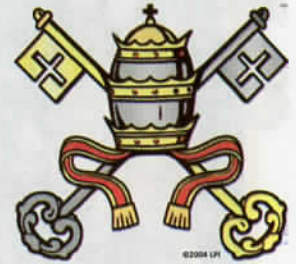# Pope Benedict XVI 2005-2013

Pope Benedict XVI was born Joseph Ratzinger on April 16, 1927 in Marktl am Inn, Germany. His father, a police officer, came from a traditional family of farmers from Lower Bavaria. Pope Benedict spent his youth in Traunstein, a small village near the Austrian border. In 1943, at the age of 16, he was, along with the rest of his class, drafted into the anti-aircraft corps. He was sent to basic infantry training and was posted to Hungary, where he worked setting up anti-tank defenses until he fled the Nazi army in April 1944 (an offense punishable by death). In 1945 he was briefly held in an Allied POW camp. By June he was released, and he and his brother entered a Catholic seminary.

Pope Benedict was ordained a priest in 1951. In 1953 he obtained his doctorate in theology with a thesis entitled: "The People and House of God in St. Augustine's Doctrine of the Church." Four years later, he qualified as a university teacher. He then taught dogma and fundamental theology at several German universities from 1959 to 1969 when he became a professor of dogmatic theology and of the history of dogma and Vice President of the University of Regensburg.

In 1962, Pope Benedict was already well known when, at the age of 35, he became a peritus, or theological expert, for the Archbishop of Cologne, Cardinal Joseph Frings, at the Second Vatican Council. In March 1977, Pope Paul VI named him Archbishop of Munich and Freising. He was ordained a bishop on May 28, 1977; he was the first diocesan priest in 80 years to take over the pastoral ministry of this large Bavarian diocese.

Pope Benedict was made a cardinal by Paul VI in the Consistory of June 27, 1977. He was one of only 14 remaining cardinals appointed by Paul VI, and one of only three of those under the age of 80 and so eligible to vote in the conclave of April 2005.

In November 1981, he was named by John Paul II as Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. He also served as President of the Pontifical Biblical Commission and of the Pontifical International Theological Commission. He became Dean of the College of Cardinals on November 30, 2002.

On April 19, 2005, after one of the briefest Papal Conclaves in modern history, Joseph Ratzinger became the 265th pope of the Roman Catholic Church, taking the name Benedict XVI.

Benedict XVI explained his choice of name during his first General Audience in St. Peter's Square, on April 27, 2005: "Filled with sentiments of awe and thanksgiving, I wish to speak of why I chose the name Benedict. Firstly, I remember Pope Benedict XV, that courageous prophet of peace, who guided the Church through turbulent times of war. In his footsteps I place my ministry in the service of reconciliation and harmony between peoples. Additionally, I recall Saint Benedict of Nursia, co-patron of Europe, whose life evokes the Christian roots of Europe. I ask him to help us all to hold firm to the centrality of Christ in our Christian life: May Christ always take first place in our thoughts and actions!"

In his eight years as Successor of St. Peter, Pope Benedict XVI authored three encyclicals (Deus Caritas Est, Spe Salvi, and Caritas in Veritate), canonized over 40 saints, named two doctors of the church, and created 90 cardinals in five consistories. He has traveled extensively across six continents, published over 30 books since his papal election, and has consistently spoken about his desire for unity in the Church, and renewing the Church and its faithful. Pope Benedict declared a Year of Faith from October 11, 2012–November 24, 2013.

Born:	Ordained a priest:	Ordained Archbishop of Munich and Freising:	Named Cardinal:	Elected to the Office of Universal Shepherd:
April 16, 1927	June 29, 1951	May 28, 1977	June 27, 1977	April 19, 2005

In Thanksgiving for his ministry

Pope Benedict XVI *2005–2013*