

## **Pope Benedict XVI A Biography**

Joseph Ratzinger was born in Marktl am Inn (on the Inn River), Germany, 16 April 1927, Holy Saturday, and was the first person baptized in the Easter Water blessed at the Easter Vigil. His father, a policeman, from a family of farmers in Lower Bavaria, was frequently transferred. In 1929, young Joseph's family moved to Tittmoning, a small town on the Salzach River, on the Austrian border.

In 1932 his father's outspoken criticism of the Nazis required the family to relocate to Auschau am Inn, at the foot of the Alps. His father retired in 1937, and his family moved to Hufschlag, outside of Traunstein. There Joseph began studying classical languages at the local gymnasium or high school. In 1939, he entered the minor seminary in Traunstein, his first step toward the priesthood.

World War II forced a postponement of his studies, until 1945, when he re-entered the seminary with his brother Georg. In 1947, he entered the Herzogliches Georgianum, a theological institute associated with the University of Munich. Finally, on 29 June 1951, both Josef and his brother were ordained to the priesthood by Cardinal Faulhaber, in the Cathedral at Freising, on the Feast of Saints Peter and Paul.

Continuing his theological studies at the University of Munich, he received his doctorate in theology in July 1953, with a thesis entitled "The People and House of God in Augustine's doctrine of the Church." He fulfilled a requirement for teaching at the university level by completing a book-length treatise on Bonaventure's theology of history and revelation. On 15 April 1959, he began lectures as a full professor of fundamental theology at the University of Bonn. From 1962-1965, he was present during all four sessions of the Second Vatican Council as a peritus, or chief theological advisor, to Cardinal Josef Frings of Köln (Cologne), Germany.

In 1963, he began teaching at the University of Münster, taking, in 1966, a second chair in dogmatic theology at the University of Tübingen. A wave of student uprisings swept across Europe in 1968, and Marxism quickly became the dominant intellectual system at Tübingen. He had no sympathy with the new radical theology, so in 1969 he moved back to Bavaria and took a teaching position at the University of Regensburg. There, he eventually became dean and vice president. He was also a member of the International Theological Commission of the Holy See from 1969 until 1980.

In 1972, together with Hans Urs von Balthasar, Henry De Lubac and others, he launched the Catholic theological journal *Communio*, a quarterly review of Catholic theology and culture. It has been said that this was done in response to the misinterpretation of the Second Vatican Council by Karl Rahner, Hans Kung and others, as represented by the theological journal *Concilium*.

On 24 March 1977, Fr. Ratzinger was elected Archbishop of Munich and Freising by Pope Paul VI. He was ordained to the episcopal Order on 28 May 1977, taking as his motto a phrase from 3 John 8, "Fellow Worker in the Truth." On 27 June 1977, he was

elevated to Cardinal (Cardinal Priest) by Pope Paul VI, with the titular church of St. Mary of Consolation (in Tiburtina). In 1980, he was named by Pope John Paul II to chair the special Synod on the Laity. Shortly after that, the pope asked him to head the Congregation for Catholic Education. Cardinal Ratzinger declined, feeling he shouldn't leave his post in Munich too soon. On 25 November 1981, he did become, however, the Prefect for the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, becoming at the same time ex officio the President of the Pontifical Biblical Commission, and the International Theological Commission.

Cardinal Ratzinger was President of the Commission for the Preparation of the Catechism of the Catholic Church, and after 6 years of work (1986-92) he presented the new Catechism to the Holy Father. On 5 April 1993, he was transferred to the order of Cardinal Bishops, with the suburbicarian see of Velletri-Signi. On 9 November 1998, his election as Vice-Dean of the Sacred College of Cardinals was approved by Pope John Paul II, and the Holy Father approved his election as Dean of the College of Cardinals on 30 November 2002, with the title of the suburbicarian See of Ostia added to that of Velletri-Segni.

Besides his prefecture at the Doctrine of the Faith, his curial memberships include: the Second Section of the Secretariat of State, the Congregation of Bishops, of Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, of Catholic Education, of Evangelization of Peoples, for the Oriental Churches; and the Pontifical Councils for Christian Unity, for Culture (councils); as well as, the Commissions Ecclesia Dei, and for Latin America.

As Dean of the College he has presided over the College's deliberations in General Congregation during the Vacancy of the Holy See, after the death of Pope John Paul II on 2 April 2005. In the same capacity he presided at the Solemn Funeral Mass for Pope John Paul II at 10 a.m. 8 April 2005 in St. Peter's Square, and the Mass For the Election of the Supreme Pontiff concelebrated by the College of Cardinals in St. Peter's Basilica at 10 a.m. on Monday 18 April 2005.

That afternoon the Cardinals processed from the Hall of Benediction of St. Peter's Basilica to the Sistine Chapel, where they solemnly inaugurated the conclave for the election of the successor to St. Peter, under the presidency of Cardinal Ratzinger. The single vote that afternoon produced no election.

On Tuesday morning, 19 April 2005, two ballots of the Conclave produced no election. However, on the first ballot of the afternoon, the fourth of the Conclave, Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger was elected the Bishop of Rome and the Supreme Pontiff of the Catholic Church. On Sunday, 24 April 2005, at 10 a.m. he celebrated the Mass for the Inauguration of his pontificate in St. Peter's Square, receiving the Pallium and the Fisherman's Ring at that liturgical celebration.