

Benedict XVI, a Pope for the Future

The new Pope smiled and his prayer could be seen in his eyes. His name had been Ratzinger, a cardinal who symbolically died in this Conclave and was changed into the first Pope of the Third Millennium.

05/19/2005

When the news about the column of white smoke at St. Peter's was announced, a torrent of jubilant humanity poured into St. Peter's

Square and adjacent streets, with people's faces fixed on the façade of the Basilica where a high relief sculpture shows the moment in which Jesus entrusts the keys of his Church to a poor fisherman.

This represents a first point of reflection. These people did not wait to know who the person chosen was before they expressed their joy. A Catholic does not need to know the specific biography of the person elected to rejoice. For the faithful the important thing is that the Church now has a Shepherd: the name, the person, the color of his skin, is less important. The decisive thing is that that man, whoever he might be, had become Peter, the new Vicar of Christ. His geographic origin, his age, are secondary features. It is the successor of the Prince of the Apostles that they awaited, that they are applauding.

Thus this jubilation, aside from being a manifestation of enthusiasm, has great meaning and theological depth. We don't know how long this Papacy will last: twenty or more years, as in the case of the last Pope? or thirty-three days, as in the case of his predecessor?

A new storm of applause breaks out. The big glass doors open out and the silhouette of Cardinal Medina appears, as a few drops of rain fall.

“My dear brothers and sisters,” he says in Italian, and then in Spanish, French, English and German. I announce to you a great joy...
Habemus papam!

A wave of joy spreads across St. Peter's Square, the Avenue of Conciliation and the surrounding streets of Rome. There are people on all of the balconies and terraces that look out on the Square, and in front of television screens throughout the

world. Few events of our global society have a dimension as global as this one.

“ . . . qui sibi nomen imposuit . . .
Benedictus XVI

New applause in St. Peter’s Square. Benedict XVI. He has chosen the name of a Pope of peace, a Pope of evangelization.

“My dear brothers and sisters,” said Benedict XVI, “after the great Pope John Paul II, the cardinals have chosen me, a humble worker in the Lord’s vineyard . . . I am consoled by the fact that our Lord makes use of inadequate instruments and I entrust myself to your prayers.”

This was followed by an invocation to the Risen Christ and to our Lady. The great stole of embroidered gold on the brilliant red cape. The new Pope smiled and his prayer could be seen in his eyes. His name had been

Ratzinger, a cardinal who symbolically died in this Conclave and was changed into the first Pope of the Third Millennium.

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