

UKRAINIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH OF CANADA
OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS

On the Resignation of Pope Benedict XVI

WINNIPEG, MB - On behalf of His Eminence Metropolitan Yurij, His Grace Bishop Ilarion, His Grace Bishop Andriy, the clergy, the monastics and the faithful of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada, the Office of Communications of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada shares the surprise and regret of the Canadian people to learn early this morning of February 11, 2013 of the resignation of Pope Benedict XVI for health reasons. This historic decision made by Pope Benedict was undoubtedly undertaken with much prayer and careful thought for God's glory and the benefit of the Catholic Church and its faithful.

Pope Benedict's election in 2005 was welcomed by Orthodox Churches worldwide. The leaders of Orthodox Church jurisdictions throughout the world have stated that Pope Benedict has shown sensitivity to Orthodox Tradition and an appreciation for the Orthodox Church's wealth of theology and spirituality. His strong support of theological dialogue has led to the development of fruitful Orthodox-Catholic relations that is enjoyed today.

In 2006 he made a historic visitation to the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople on the Patronal Feast Day of St. Andrew and shared common concerns on the dignity for human life, the environment and peace in the Middle East. It was the first visit of a Pope to the Ecumenical Patriarchate since 1979. This visit opened the way for greater dialogue that continues today. He has also hosted annual delegations from the Ecumenical Patriarchate to the Vatican on the Patronal Feast Day of Sts. Peter and Paul.

Pope Benedict has also lent his voice to support the plight of the less fortunate in our homeland Ukraine on such issues as religious freedom, improved social conditions and democratic reforms.

Pope Benedict will be remembered and honoured for his theological contributions and cooperation with the Orthodox Church during his ministry. The Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada offers Pope Benedict sincere best wishes and God's blessings for good health.