



A message to the faithful of the archdiocese from Archbishop Michael Jackels

1 January 2023

At the passing of **Pope emeritus Benedict XVI**, we pray: Eternal rest grant unto him, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon him. May his soul, and the souls of all the faithful departed, rest in peace.

The death of a Pope is accompanied by certain customary prayerful observances for the happy repose of his soul, such as:

- Tolling the church bells to call the Catholic Faithful to prayer
- Pray the Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory Be
- Pray the Holy Rosary
- Celebrate Holy Mass

It is also customary to continue such observance on each of the 9 days after the funeral (5-14 January 2023).

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Folks may remember that I worked in the office led by Cardinal Ratzinger before he was elected Pope and took the name Benedict, the 16th by that name.

During those 8 years, I rarely had contact with him. He knew who I was, but he didn't know me (very small fish, really big pond). I likewise didn't know him, except for what I observed, which is this:

One of his nicknames was "God's rottweiler," conveying that he was like a dog on a doctrinal bone, and a vicious, ferocious one at that.

True, he loved our holy Catholic Faith, and thought and fought that Jesus' disciples should follow the Master. But what I observed was a Christian gentleman...

Humble and loving, as a friend of Jesus should be; kind and gentle in his speech and behavior towards others, even those who pushed the doctrinal envelope; and very cultured and well-mannered as is befitting a gentleman.

He was super smart and holy, but some say he was a poor administrator and poor judge of character. I don't know about his administrative skills, but his poor judgement of character can be seen in his promoting me to be the archbishop of Dubuque!

I had great respect for him... until I learned he liked cats; he was human, he had his flaws (pets with claws), which he acknowledged in his last spiritual testament, asking us to pray for him, that God will nevertheless admit him to heaven.

His last words were said to be: "Jesus, I love you." How beautiful. By contrast, when I thought my life was about to end from a heart attack, I could've been heard to say: "Jesus is gonna take me to Christmas land" (but then that's me).

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