

April 19, 2005

BISHOP'S STATEMENT ON THE ELECTION OF

POPE BENEDICT XVI

(HOLLIDAYSBURG, PA) – The following is a statement from the Most Reverend Bishop Joseph V. Adamec of the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown regarding today's election of Pope Benedict XVI:

“One cannot but rejoice at the election of Pope Benedict XVI to the See of Saint Peter. He will provide the leadership appropriate to our age. The fact that the conclave lasted such a short period of time, along with the fact that he was rumored and was actually elected (not usually the case), helps to confirm the action of the Spirit of God in the selection of Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger.

He is a gentle person. At the same time, he is very well qualified in a number of ways to be the spiritual leader of the Roman Catholic Church. That includes his knowledge of and experience in the Church.

It is important to note that we ought not to expect big changes in the Roman Catholic Church, as the result of an election of a new Pope. Popes, as well as bishops, do not make laws or change laws as much as they apply the teachings of Jesus to a current age. There are teachings whose application might change from time to time but which do not change in substance. Respect for human life is one of them.

While Pope Benedict XVI will preserve the fundamental teachings of the Church, he will be his own man, putting his own personality on the papacy. That is as it should be. We would be doing him a disservice if we began comparing him to the wonderful Pope John Paul II. Pope Benedict XVI will be wonderful in his own way.

What is truly wonderful is that, whoever is the Bishop of Rome (and, therefore, the pope), Roman Catholics believe that their Church continues as the Assembly of Believers, which witnesses to God's love and mercy in ways that serve the particular age in which we live.

In the name of the Diocesan Church of Altoona-Johnstown, I pledge our new Holy Father our prayers, support, and loyalty. And, I ask our people to remember him and the tremendous responsibility to which he has been called in their conversations with the Lord.”