



Archdiocese of Santa Fe
THE CATHOLIC CENTER
4000 SAINT JOSEPH'S PLACE, N.W.
ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO 87120-1709

**ACTION NEEDED:
To Be Read at all
Masses on weekend of
February 16-17, 2013**

February 12, 2013
Year of Faith

AREA CODE 505 831-8100

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Pope Benedict XVI has made a courageous decision and I encourage you to keep him in your prayers. For the Pope to make the decision to resign effective February 28, 2013 took a lot of prayer, courage and strength. All of us who are senior citizens can attest to the changes in our bodies and energy levels.

From Blessed Pope John Paul II we learned that senior citizens can make invaluable contributions to society and we were encouraged to give the best we can until our Lord calls us from this earth. From Pope Benedict XVI we learn to take an account of how we can function to best of our ability but to make wise decisions when we know that we have given the best in us and to courageously move when we can give no more.

Our Holy Father is a wise and balanced teacher whose leadership brought great stability to the Church. He expressed the sound and orthodox teachings of Doctrine and faithfulness to the liturgical traditions of the Church. He wrote three beautiful and readable books on Jesus of Nazareth. He canonized Kateri Tekakwitha, the first American Indian Saint, which gave great joy to our many Native American Catholics of New Mexico.

Canon Law provides an option for a Pope to step down, but stipulates that the decision must be made freely and duly manifested. This has been done. Effective February 28, 2013 the leadership of the Roman Catholic Church is being guided by the College of Cardinals until a new Pope is elected. We understand that the Cardinals will gather in Rome around mid-March and that a new Pope is expected to be elected by Holy Week.

Let us pray for Pope Benedict XVI. We are grateful for his priesthood, for his episcopacy and for his papacy. May God grant him peace while he enters a cloistered life. Let us pray for the Holy Spirit to enter the hearts, minds and souls of our Cardinals as they elect our new Pontiff. Let us remember that Our Savior, Jesus Christ, promised that he would be with the Church he founded until the end of time.

Sincerely yours in the Risen Lord,

Most Rev. Michael J. Sheehan
Archbishop of Santa Fe