



ARCHDIOCESE OF WASHINGTON

POPE BENEDICT XVI: QUICK FACTS

- Pope Benedict XVI is the 265th Pope
 - Born Joseph Aloysius Ratzinger in Bavaria, Germany, on April 16, 1927, which was Holy Saturday
 - Will celebrate his 81st birthday while he is visiting Washington
 - Ordained into the priesthood on June 29, 1951
 - Elected to the papacy on April 19, 2005
 - Chose the name Benedict after St. Benedict and Pope Benedict XV
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A Brief Biography of Pope Benedict XVI

Pope Benedict XVI was born Joseph Aloysius Ratzinger in Marktl am Inn, Bavaria, on Holy Saturday (April 16, 1927). He grew up under the Nazi regime. In fact, his cousin, who suffered from Down Syndrome, was murdered by the Nazis. He entered the seminary in 1939, but was drafted into the German army at age 16. He later escaped from the army and reentered the seminary. He was ordained into the priesthood on June 29, 1951.

He later became a university lecturer and worked closely with John Paul II as Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. He was elected as pontiff on April 19, 2005.

Important Books and Writings

- Encyclicals: *Deus caritas est* (God is Love) 2005 and *Spe salvi* (On Christian Hope) 2007
- *Images of Hope: Meditations on Major Feasts* (2006)
- *Values in a Time of Upheaval: Meeting the Challenges of the Future* (2006)
- *God and the World: Believing and Living in Our Time* (2002)

Timeline

- 1927: Joseph Ratzinger born in Marktl am Inn, Bavaria
- 1939: Entered the seminary
- 1943: At the age of 16, he and members of his seminary class are drafted into the German anti-aircraft corps.
- 1945: Escaped from the army and returned to Traunstein. He is briefly held by American forces in a prisoner of war camp. After his release, he reentered the seminary.
- 1951: Ordained into the priesthood
- 1953: Received his doctorate in theology from the University of Munich
- 1959: Began lecturing as a professor of fundamental theology at the University of Bonn
- 1962-1965: Participated in all four sessions of the Second Vatican Council
- 1977: Named Archbishop of Munich and Freising in March and elevated to Cardinal of Munich in June
- 1981: Named Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith by Pope John Paul II
- 2002: Elected Dean of the College of Cardinals
- 2005: Cardinal Ratzinger elected as the 265th Pope and chooses the name Pope Benedict XVI in honor of St. Benedict, the founder of Western monasticism, and of Benedict XV, who was Pope during World War I and a promoter of peace