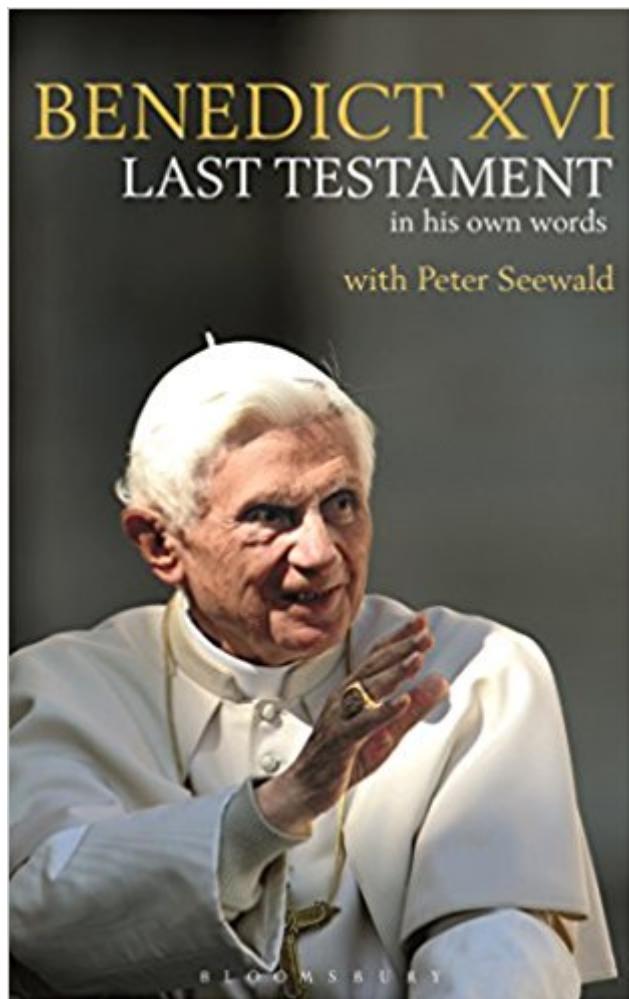


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Last Testament: In His Own Words



Synopsis

Pope Benedict made history by being the first Pope in over 700 years to resign from office. The Catholic Church the world over was stunned. Worn out by corruption in the Church and by an endless series of clerical sex scandals, he decided that the resolution of all these problems was outside his power for a man of his age. Last Testament is nearest to an autobiography from the shy and private man who has remained "hidden to the world" in a former convent in the Vatican gardens. He breaks his silence on issues such as:- The "Vatileaks" case in which his butler leaked some of his personal letters that alleged corruption and scandal in the Vatican- The presence of a "gay lobby" within the Vatican and how he dismantled it- His alleged Nazi upbringing - His attempts at cleaning up the "dirt in the church" (clerical sexual abuse) - The mysterious private secretary "Gorgeous George". On a more personal level he writes with great warmth of his successor Pope Francis, who he admits has a popular touch, a star quality which he has lacked. Much controversy still surrounds Pope Benedict's Papacy--in this book he addresses these controversies and reveals how at his late age, governing and reforming the Papacy and particularly the Vatican, was beyond him.

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Customer Reviews

"The most sincere interview which Benedict XVI has given . . . It is gripping from the very beginning . . . An exquisite conversation between two people who know each other, like each other, and have mutual respect for one another . . . A fantastic book which should not be overlooked by any open-minded Catholic who wishes to learn from our great tradition but also wants to progress with

the Church." - The Catholic Times "Throughout there are moments of breathtaking candor . . . it's stunning to realize you're reading the inner thoughts--and confessions--of a former pope now speaking without the weight of that papal mantle . . . The portrait here is one that deepens and defends the place of Benedict in history." - Chicago Tribune "There are beautiful moments in the book." - The Huffington Post "The most revealing book yet on Benedict XVI . . . Seewald has gathered in perhaps the finest harvest yet. For more than a decade I have read everything I can about Benedict XVI, but I was amazed by the revelations in this new book." - Catholic Herald "Joseph Ratzinger has certainly been a great theologian . . . Last Testament [is] revealing about who this underrated man really is . . . He bears comparison with the greatest doctors of the Church." - Prospect "Prophetic and important analysis. The Testament is a fascinating read for this and so much more, and there is a consistent note of joyful and solid faith which is an inspiration." - Joanna Bogle, The Catholic World Report "I can't begin to describe the influence that the writings of Joseph Ratzinger have had on me . . . but suffice it to say that this beautiful and compelling book may well be the final gem in the crown of his work that we've all been waiting for." - Paul Senz, The Catholic World Report "[Last Testament] deepens our sense of the personality, gentleness, humor, and subtlety of the pope emeritus." - First Things "The book is striking on a number of levels . . . The first 100 pages alone make the book worth purchasing, generously sprinkled as it is with these tiny flakes of biographical intimacy, which can surprise as much as they move . . . One other pleasant aspect of reading this book, especially when one approaches the second half, has been the little displays of wit and sometimes attitude." - Patheos "Offers readers a journey through the theological life of the retired pope." - Superior Catholic Herald

Pope Benedict XVI served as pope of the Catholic Church from 2005 to 2013. He was elected pope on April 19, 2005, was inaugurated on April 24, 2005 and resigned from the office on February 28, 2013.

Suppose you were offered an opportunity to interview Pope Benedict XVI for an hour a day for a series of days. What would you ask him? What format would you like the meeting to have? This is probably the last opportunity, of a total of four, that Peter Seewald has had to do this. By now, I have listened to all of the interviews. The first interview is *Salt of the Earth: The Church at the End of the Millennium*, the second was *Light of the World: The Pope, The Church and the Signs Of The Times*, and *God and the World: A Conversation With Peter Seewald* being the third. I was very impressed by these. As with this book, I was interested initially and primarily in this because of

the questions that were asked (the issues probed are listed above in the book description). They are ones that we all would probably like answers for. I am very curious. I wanted to hear how Pope Benedict would answer them. What makes it more interesting, Seewald does not supply the questions ahead of time. He asks. The pope responds. This gives us the chance to hear the Holy Father speak his mind unrehearsed. That's also the way the Pope wants it. It is here that we understand his grasp of the Church and its teachings, mission and history, as well as its problems, shortcomings, difficulties and failures. He hides from nothing. In fact, it is surprising how frank he is in his responses. It is almost as if he sympathizes with Seewald's looking for answers. He gives the Church a certain humanness that is very attractive, something that many are looking for at the parish level. One of the strongest impressions that he has left in my mind as Pope is that he describes his role, not as you might expect--the world leader of a billion Catholics--but as someone who is to bear witness to Christ. He does not pontificate. Pope Benedict is certainly not a light-weight. His wisdom and understanding of matters is such that he can break things down to people at all levels, including children. I was there witnessing this at World Youth Day in Cologne. It was amazing! I hope to also read this as an audiobook, which I think always adds to the satisfaction of it. It's not the Pope's voice, but you can imagine! As is the case with many books that I really like, I buy both the audio and either the hardcover or paperback edition. Doing that with a book like this allows me to dive into the text to draw whatever more I can from something like this interview I have listened to. A great contribution to the Church and to people of all faiths. I believe that this can help greatly in clearing up many misunderstandings people may have. A great read! A page-turner!

Full disclosure: I am a great Ratzinger fan, and I think that he is one of the most important Christian theologians of the last half century. Normally I read his theological works, so it was a particular pleasure to read this extended interview which, at a relaxed but insistent pace, takes us through some of this beautiful person's life and thoughts. I doubt whether the popular misconception of Ratzinger as cold and aloof will survive a reading of this book. Thank you for everything, Papa.

Last Testament contains the latest interviews with Pope Benedict XVI (Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, born 1927) conducted by journalist Peter Seewald. Other interview volumes include: Salt of the Earth (1997), God and the World (2002), and Light of the World (2010). This volume includes talk of Ratzinger's early life up to present day (2016). Again, and again, Ratzinger's focus on the importance of faith shines through his life. This was a responsibility he accepted and shared with the world. Many details of growing up in Germany were not interesting to me. But his life as a

theologian was very interesting especially work surrounding Vatican II and following work from Bishop to Pope. I appreciated hearing a back-room perspective and gained new insights regarding theological development. The interview gives the reader a sense of Ratzinger's theological development and includes discussion of the German theological environment after WWII. Comments on meetings and influence of Balthasar, Rahner, Kung, and Pope John Paul II were especially interesting. The book allows one to encounter Ratzinger as teacher, philosopher, theologian, and Pope. I also enjoyed learning some of Ratzinger's personal traits, such as: he prefers to write in pencil and uses his own shorthand, enjoys silence to reflect and a sofa to think, prefers to work during the day and requires a good night's sleep. There are small gems throughout the book that touch on many areas of interest for each individual reader. Every chapter may not be interesting and may appear too detailed, but my overall take-away is very positive. The book includes a timeline of Ratzinger's life, but not an index.

I started it last night and I am very grateful that it is so easy to understand in that it is written in a question answer format. I don't think many refer to Pope Benedict XVI as innocent and charming but that is always my encounter with him and linear. He thinks and speaks rationally from one point to the next and does not obfuscate issues but makes them very clear, intriguing and understandable. I consider him a friend, a spiritual friend and we are graced to have one more book from him.

What a joy to hear from Benedict XVI again! This book is thoughtful and beautifully written. I plan to give copies to all my friends for Christmas.

A gentle yet deep read. I read the book through twice and appreciated it differently with each read. Pope Benedict XVI is revealed as a man of thought and prayer who loves Jesus almost "in his bones". His forthrightness about the difficulties he faced before and after becoming pope was beautifully honest. The book presents a reflective, quiet, caring, principled human being, someone I would love to know personally after reading it!

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