



Press release

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Pope Benedict XVI - tracing his footsteps in Munich

Pope Benedict XVI comes from Bavaria. His developing years, which he spent in Munich and Freising, are arousing interest at home and abroad for a tour of his stations in Munich: He studied theology and philosophy in Freising and Munich from 1946 to 1951, and was ordained to the priesthood in Munich in 1951. In 1952, after serving as a chaplain in Munich-Bogenhausen, he began teaching at the Clerical Seminary and at the Theological College in Freising, where he was nominated associate professor in 1958. He went on to teach at various German universities. He returned to his native Bavaria in 1977 after being elected archbishop of Munich and Freising. On May 28, 1977, he consecrated as bishop here, and on June 27 of the same year, was elected Cardinal. In 1981, he was invited by Pope John Paul II to Rome to become Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, whereby he asserted he would remain a Bavarian, wherever he happened to be..

The Munich Tourist Office is now offering foot tours on this theme “In the footsteps of Benedict XVI in Munich.”

The stops on the tour are the following: The Marian Column on Marienplatz, the Bürgersaal Church, the Frauenkirche, the Archiepiscopal Seat, the Archbishop's Court, the Peterskirche, Isator and the Valentinusäum. Additional information will be provided about other places where he lived and worked: the Theological Academy (debate with the philosopher Jürgen Habermas), the Heilig Blut (Holy Blood) Church (from his days as chaplain), etc. The press department of the Tourist Office has a detailed description of the various stations available.

To book the city foot tour, please contact the Munich Tourist Office:

Tel: +49 (0)89 / 233 - 30231 or - 30234

Fax: +49 (0) 89 / 233 - 30337 or email: gaestefuehrungen@muenchen.de

Duration: about: 2 hours, max 20-25 per tour guide

Fee / tour: 95 Euros (German), 100 Euros (foreign language), 122 Euros (bilingual)

The tour is offered in over 20 languages.

The design of the tours can be varied if requested.

For more information: Else Gebauer, Tel: +49(0)89/233-30257, email:
else.gebauer@muenchen.de

Comprehensive press information:

Munich and Pope Benedict XVI

The Bavarian capital is one of the most important stations in the life of Joseph Ratzinger, the priest, archbishop and cardinal, who was elected Pope on April 19, 2005. Born on April 16, 1927, in Marktl am Inn in the diocese of Passau, Ratzinger spent most of his childhood, youth and student days within the borders of the archbishopric of Munich and Freising. Aschau am Inn, Traunstein, Freising and the Bavarian capital Munich were important locations in his life.

As a chaplain in Munich

On June 29, 1951, he was ordained to the priesthood by Cardinal Michael Faulhaber in the Cathedral of Mary in Freising. As a young priest, he worked first as a chaplain in St. Martin parish in the district of Munich-Moosach, then in the Church of Heilig Blut (Holy Blood) in the district of Bogenhausen.

Doctorate and postdoctoral lecture qualification

He earned his doctorate at the Catholic Theological Department of the University of Munich in 1953 with Professor Gottlieb Söhngen, writing his dissertation on "The People and the House of God in Augustine's Teachings of the Church." He also earned his postdoctoral lecture qualification at the University of Munich in 1957 with a dissertation on the medieval Franciscan theologian Bonaventura.

Back to Munich after working as a professor of theology in Germany

On March 25, 1977, Ratzinger was nominated by Pope Paul VI to become archbishop of Munich and Freising after years of work as a professor of theology at the Philosophical-Catholic University of Freising (1958-1959), at the University of Bonn (1959-1963), Münster (1963-1966), Tübingen (1966-1969) and finally Regensburg (1969-1977). On May 28, 1977, he was consecrated as bishop in the Frauenkirche (Cathedral of Our Lady) in Munich, and on June 27, 1977 was elevated to the College of Cardinals. In early 1982, he was chosen by Pope John Paul II to become Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

April 19, 2005: Elected Pope Benedict XVI

On April 19, 2005, the feast day of Pope and Saint Leo IX (1048-1054), who was born in Alsace, Joseph Ratzinger was elected pope by the conclave of Cardinals of the Catholic World Church in Rome. He took the name Benedict XVI, after Saint Benedict, the father of occidental monasticism and the patron saint of Europe. This name is also a reference to Pope Benedict XV (1914-1922), a vocal advocate of peace and understanding amongst peoples, who went down in history as a reformist pope.

The new pope is celebrated in Munich

Immediately after Ratzinger's election as pope, thousands of Munich residents gathered spontaneously at the Frauenkirche. They celebrated the Bavarian pope with a long and joyful ova-

tion and prayed for him during a solemn mass. On May 5, 2005, on the high feast of the Ascension, the archbishop of Munich and Freising, Cardinal Friedrich Wetter, celebrated a thanksgiving mass for the Bavarian pope in the cathedral, which was crowded with faithful from the entire archbishopric. A unit of the Bavarian mountain rifle regiment, of which the pope is an honorary member, fired an honor salute for Benedict XVI.

The tour:

The Marian Column. . .

. . . was erected in the center of the Bavaria capital in 1638 by the Bavarian Prince Elector Maximilian I. The Prince Elector wanted to thank God for having saved Munich from the vicissitudes of war.

On February 28, 1982, Cardinal Ratzinger went to the Marian Column and announced his departure from the archbishopric to go to Rome to serve as Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith at the side of the Pope.

A religious symbol of special reverence for Mary, Mother of God, the Marian Column also represents Munich's oldest memorial to peace. Under National Socialism, the Marian Column became the site of silent protest against the regime for many people. After the end of World War Two, on November 18, 1945, with the city in ruins, thousands of Munich citizens joined in re-storing the Marian Column to Marienplatz.

All archbishops of Munich and Freising, including Cardinal Ratzinger, have entertained a special relationship to this spiritual focus of Bavaria. They get together on various occasions to celebrate masses and meditations before this image of the Mother of God with baby Jesus. It is also the site of the altar for the celebration of the Eucharist, where the huge Corpus Christi procession through the inner city of Munich begins every year. Munich's Catholics gather here for the May meditations, which are dedicated to the Virgin Mary, and for the rosary prayers in October.

On November 18, 1980, Pope John Paul II and Cardinal Ratzinger joined with thousands of people before the Marian Column to pray the "Angel of the Lord," a Christian prayer that reflects on the incarnation of God.

The Peterskirche . . .

. . . lovingly referred to by locals as “Old Peter,” is Munich’s oldest city parish church. Earliest mention of the church dates back to the 11th century. It was almost completely destroyed by bombs during World War Two. Thanks to the dedication and financial engagement of many citizens, the church was restored to new beauty yet with a conscious connection to old tradition.

The church bears the name of the holy apostle Peter, Christianity’s first bishop and the first pope. This is represented in the splendid high altar, in the middle of which appears a figure of Saint Peter carved by the medieval sculptor Erasmus Grasser. The saint is portrayed in the traditional garb of the popes: He is wearing the tiara, the threefold crown worn by popes in the previous centuries, which was abandoned by Pope Paul VI. Whenever a pope dies, the tiara is removed from the statue in Munich’s “Old Peter,” when the new pope is then elected, the statue is crowned again. This was done for the election of the Bavarian pope Benedict XVI as well.

After the attempt on the life of Pope John Paul II on May 15, 1981, the then archbishop, Cardinal Ratzinger, held a mass in St. Peter for the recovery of the severely wounded pope. The regional bishop of the Protestant Church in Bavaria, Johannes Hanselmann, also attended the mass to pray for the pope’s recovery. Cardinal Ratzinger thanked the regional bishop for “the brotherly words of consolation and commiseration.” Already on the day of the attempted assassination, on May 13, 1981, thousands of people gathered spontaneously with Cardinal Ratzinger at the Marian Column in Munich to pray a rosary for the severely wounded pope. The Marian Column stands on the area of the parish of St. Peter.

The Bürgersaalkirche

. . . in Munich’s pedestrian zone bears the name “Church of the Burghers’ Hall,” because it was founded during the 18th century as a meeting hall for the Marian men’s congregation of the Munich citizenry. To this day, this men’s congregation, which is traditionally led by the Jesuits, has remained an important ecclesiastical institution of the Bavarian capital. The tomb of the Jesuit priest Rupert Mayer (1876-1945), which is visited by thousands of faithful daily, is located in the Lower Church. Mayer, who was revered for his vigorous social commitment and above all for his courageous opposition to the National Socialists, was beatified by Pope John Paul II in the Olympia Stadium on May 3, 1987. Cardinal Ratzinger also attended the beatification on the side of the Pope and the archbishop of Munich and Freising, Cardinal Friedrich Wetter. After the beatification, Cardinals Ratzinger and Wetter joined the Pope in prayer at the tomb of Rupert Mayer.

The Frauenkirche, the Cathedral “of Our Lady,” . . .

. . . is the world-famous hallmark of the Bavarian capital. It was completed by the master builder Jörg von Halspach in 1488, and has not been altered since. Bavaria's largest church has served as the cathedral of the archbishops of Munich and Freising since 1821. The ancient Bavarian bishopric of Freising, which was canonically established in 739 by Saint Bonifatius on order of the Pope, survived after secularization in the newly formed archbishopric of Munich and Freising. Munich has served as the seat of the archbishop ever since .

1977-1982, Archbishop of Munich and Freising

On March 25, 1977, Joseph Ratzinger, then professor of theology, was named archbishop of Munich and Freising by Pope Paul VI. He was consecrated as bishop in the Frauenkirche on May 28, 1977. He headed Bavaria's largest diocese – nearly 2 million Catholics – before taking up the position of Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith on February 15, 1982.

Cardinal Ratzinger held masses in his cathedral during the high feast days of the church year and gave groundbreaking sermons. In 1980, he welcomed Pope John Paul II to Munich, who focused attention on the elderly and the disabled in a powerful sermon held in the Frauenkirche. A bronze relief in the Frauenkirche recalls the Pope's visit.

Cardinal Ratzinger's episcopal coat-of-arms

Cardinal Ratzinger's coat-of-arms, located in the Frauenkirche's ambulatory, testifies to his work. It shows the emblem of the old prince-bishopric of Freising, the so-called "Freising Moors," and the so-called "Korbinian Bears," which refer to the saint and bishop Korbinian, who is revered as the spiritual father of the bishopric and the patron of the diocese. The coat-of-arms also bears a shell, a reference to the saint and church father Augustine, who was the subject of the theologian Ratzinger's dissertation. Cardinal Ratzinger's motto is also written on the coat-of-arms: *Cooperatores veritatis – laborers of truth*. Ratzinger included the Moor, the bears and the shell on his papal coat-of-arms, thus expressing his personal connection to his Bavarian homeland.

Planned artistic work

The archdiocese is planning to commission an artistic work for the Frauenkirche that will commemorate the fact that Pope Benedict XVI worked here as archbishop.

The Archiepiscopal Seat in Munich . . .

. . . is the administrative headquarters of the large and multifaceted archbishopric of Munich and Freising. Cardinal Ratzinger's offices were located here during his tenure as archbishop of Munich and Freising.

The Ordinariat, as it is called in German, handles all the tasks of the episcopal administration, legal matters and church's finances in the name of the archbishop. The administrative headquarters are located in a former Carmelite convent in the vicinity of Munich's erstwhile medieval city wall. Every week at the Ordinariat, the archbishop presides over the major work discussions presented by the department heads. During his tenure as archbishop, Cardinal Ratzinger led the conferences of the Ordinariat council here.

The archdiocese, which comprises almost the same borders as the government district of Upper Bavaria, is home to almost 2 million Catholics living in both rural and urban areas. 800 women and men work at the Ordinariat. They perform services for the extensive religious, social and cultural work of the diocese's 755 parishes, which are run by 1,137 priests.

Munich's Archiepiscopal Court . . .

. . . has been the dwelling and official seat of the archbishops of Munich and Freising since 1821. The so-called Holnstein Palais, built in 1738 by the famous rococo architect François Cuvilliés and named after its first owner, was made available as the seat of the archbishops in the former residence city by the Bavarian government.

Cardinal Ratzinger lived and worked here during his days as archbishop of Munich and Freising (1977-1982).

The building, which has mostly high-ceilinged representative rooms, was only brought up to modern standards of comfort during the 1970s. The offices of the archiepiscopal secretariat are located here, as is the apartment of the archbishop, and that of his secretary and of women of the Order who take care of the household.

The Valentin Musäum . . . or the Karl Valentin Fountain / monument on the Viktualienmarkt

. . . at Isartor, named after the comedian and author Karl Valentin (1882-1948), and the name of Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, now Pope Benedict XVI... where is the connection?

Munich journalists also wondered about this in 1989, when the Mardi-gras society Narrhalla decided to award the Bavarian-born Curial Cardinal Ratzinger the Karl-Valentin Medal. "What does Karl Valentin have to do with the Cardinal? No one knows," was the headline on Munich's *Abendzeitung* newspaper (No. 4, Jan. 5, 1989).

Ratzinger responded to the Mardi-gras tomfoolery with grace and wit. In his speech before the Mardi-gras society, he said: "Since my job instructs me to tell the truth, I must say, I am quite glad to have now been raised to the estate of those who have this privilege."

At the conferring of the order ceremonies in the Catholic Academy in Bavaria, the Cardinal's sister was asked: "Is there such a thing as humor in the Vatican? She responded smartly, much in the style of Karl Valentin: "Yes, but I don't know Italian." The caricaturists handled the Cardinal's foolery in their own way: The comedian, Karl Valentin, is sitting rather uncomfortably on a cloud, and his erstwhile stage partner Liesl Karlstadt says to him: "You will soon be canonized, for sure, Karl..." (*Münchner Stadtanzeiger*, Jan 5, 1989)