

Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI Sends Special Message to Franciscan University President

3-4 minutes

STEUBENVILLE, OH—Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI sent a letter to Father Dave Pivonka, TOR '89, president of Franciscan University of Steubenville, expressing his joy and gratitude for the [2022 Annual Conference of the Joseph Ratzinger/Pope Benedict XVI Vatican Foundation](#), which is taking place at the University, October 20-21.

The conference marks the first time the foundation has focused its annual gathering on Benedict's thought.

Father Federico Lombardi, SJ, president of the Joseph Ratzinger/Pope Benedict XVI Vatican Foundation, read Benedict's letter to over 350 conference participants.

"It is a great honor and joy for me that in the United States of America, at Franciscan University of Steubenville, an International Symposium is dealing with my ecclesiology," wrote Benedict.

The four-page letter includes an insightful personal summary of the direction of his own thought and how, in Vatican II, "the question of the Church in the world finally became the real central problem."

Benedict concluded by expressing his sincere hope that the conference at Franciscan University would "be helpful in the struggle for a right understanding of the Church and the world in our time."

"It is a great gift for me personally and for our entire University community to receive such a warm message of thanks and support from Benedict XVI, our pope emeritus," said Father Pivonka. "I join him in my hope that this conference will make great progress in exploring the riches of his thought and applying them to the many opportunities in the Church today."

Conference speaker Peter Casarella, PhD, professor at Duke

Divinity School, commented on the significance of Benedict's letter. "Later scholars will come and look at this Steubenville document to see how he is always reflecting, even at the age of 95, on continuity and change in the whole of Catholic Tradition."

From October 20-21, theologians from around the world are gathering with over 350 attendees at Franciscan University to focus on "Joseph Ratzinger's vision of the Church and its relevance for contemporary challenges." Conference themes include culture, church and state, history, eschatology, synodality, the liturgy, petrine primacy, Scripture, ecumenism, secularism, pastoral care, evangelization, the role of women, and much more.

For more information, visit Franciscan University's website: [2022 Annual Conference of the Joseph Ratzinger/Pope Benedict XVI Foundation](#).

Please see the attachment for the full text of Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI's letter to Father Dave Pivonka, TOR, president of Franciscan University of Steubenville.

[Benedict XVI Letter to Fr Dave Pivonka TOR](#)