



# NEWS

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **STATEMENT OF BISHOP SKYLSTAD ON ELECTION OF POPE BENEDICT XVI**

WASHINGTON-In a statement on behalf of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), Bishop William S. Skylstad expressed great joy at the election of His Holiness, Pope Benedict XVI.

"We send him our congratulations and our prayers as he begins his ministry as Bishop of Rome and the universal pastor of the Catholic Church," said Bishop Skylstad, President of the USCCB.

"Pope Benedict XVI is familiar with the Church in the United States," Bishop Skylstad said. "I have had the opportunity to visit the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith and to meet with Cardinal Ratzinger on behalf of the Bishops' Conference on various issues. I have always found him to be very open and pastoral, with a listening ear, especially sensitive to the situation of the Church in this country."

"I know that he will be a faithful shepherd, after the example of the Good Shepherd Himself, and I offer him on behalf of the bishops, priests, deacons, religious, and laity of the United States our support, fidelity, and love," Bishop Skylstad said.

Following is the full text of the statement of Bishop Skylstad.

On behalf of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, I want to express our great joy at the election of His Holiness, Pope Benedict XVI. We send him our congratulations and our prayers as he begins his ministry as Bishop of Rome and the universal pastor of the Catholic Church.

As a theologian, a bishop, and as the head of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, the new Pope has the kind of experience in church leadership which commended him to his fellow cardinals as a worthy successor to St. Peter and as Christ's Vicar here on earth. He has had considerable experience in the Holy See over these many years and, as such, he has had contact with the Church throughout the world in terms of many significant issues. He is a man of great humility and dedication to the discipleship of Christ, as well as a man of great intelligence.

Pope Benedict XVI is familiar with the Church in the United States. Over the past few years, I have had the opportunity to visit the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith and to meet with Cardinal Ratzinger on behalf of the Bishops' Conference on various issues. I have always found him to be very open and pastoral, with a listening ear, especially sensitive to the situation of the Church in this country.

We congratulate him and pray for him as he takes on this new responsibility of being the Holy Father, not only for the Church, but for the world.

I know that he will be a faithful shepherd, after the example of the Good Shepherd Himself, and I offer him on behalf of the bishops, priests, deacons, religious, and laity of the United States our support, fidelity, and love.

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