



World Council of Churches

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To: His Eminence Cardinal Kurt Koch

cc: Bishop Brian Farrell

cc: Rev. Dr Andrzej Choromanski

Geneva, 2 January 2023

Letter of condolences at the passing of His Holiness, Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI (1927-2022)

*The friendship of the Lord is for those who fear him, and he makes his
covenant known to them. (Ps 25: 14)*

Your Eminence,

It is with deep sadness that we heard of the passing of His Holiness, Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI on 31 December 2022. We all mourn with the entire Roman Catholic Church the passing of a great servant of God.

The theological, pastoral and ecumenical legacy of Pope Benedict XVI remains forever. At the heart of his spiritual leadership was the promotion of a culture of peace and global solidarity. During his papacy, Pope Benedict XVI encouraged deeper understanding and cooperation with different Christian communions that trace their roots back to the Reformation as well as with the Orthodox Church, by stressing the significant elements of shared faith. For the World Council of Churches (WCC), he will remain as the first pope to have belonged to one of its committees, in the times when he was acting as a professor of theology at the University of Tübingen, Germany. As one of the Catholic members of WCC Faith and Order Commission, he not only brought an important theological contribution, but also showed the irreversible journey of the Catholic Church in the one ecumenical movement, for which we are truly grateful.

Pope Benedict XVI will remain in the memory of the Church as one of the finest and renowned theologians of the 21st century, an inspired spiritual leader who committed himself to a common and prophetic voice of Christians in the face of societal challenges. He was a man of deep faith, who cultivated humbleness and a servant leadership.

We pray that the soul of Pope Benedict XVI may rest in the tents of the righteous (Ps 118:15) and in the light, peace and love of the Most Holy Trinity, giving thanks to Christ, our Lord, who is the resurrection and the life (cf. John 11:25), as we give thanks for the life and ministry of His Holiness.

On behalf of the World Council of Churches, I extend our profound condolences to his close friends, colleagues and collaborators in the Vatican and across the globe as well as to the entire Roman Catholic Church.

May his memory be eternal!

Yours in the Risen Lord,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Pillay", written in a cursive style.

Rev. Prof. Dr Jerry Pillay
General Secretary
World Council of Churches