



The Archdiocese of San Antonio

**For Immediate Release
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Official statement of Archbishop José H. Gomez on the election of the new Pope

Today is a day of great joy and celebration for Catholics throughout the world with the election of Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, as Pope Benedict XVI.

In his homily at the Mass for the beginning of the Conclave he gives us a glimpse of himself as a Pope who continues to challenge us as followers of Jesus. He said, “We must become mature in this adult faith; we must guide the flock of Christ to this faith. And it is this faith – only faith – which creates unity and takes the form of love.

In these words he challenges us to “the maturity of Christ”. This adulthood in faith, the Pope said, will prepare us to have the strength to meet the challenges the faith of Catholics will face in years to come.

The new Pope is a holy man who worked closely with Pope John Paul II for so many years, and I am sure will continue in a spirit of faith and unity, bringing us together to face the needs of the Church and the world with courage and love.

Pope Benedict XVI is also a man of great wisdom and humility. A humble spirit that is reflected in his comments as he was named Pope: “I’m consoled by the fact that the Lord knows how to work with insufficient tools, and I entrust myself to your prayers. In the joy of the Lord, and with his permanent help, we will work, along with Mary, his mother, who is on our side.”

We join the whole Church in prayer for this man who has been called to be our Shepherd on a journey that will lead us all to a better understanding of Christ presence among us, and our Christian call to be the light in the world, the salt of the earth.