

Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, elected 265th pope.

Pope Benedict XVI

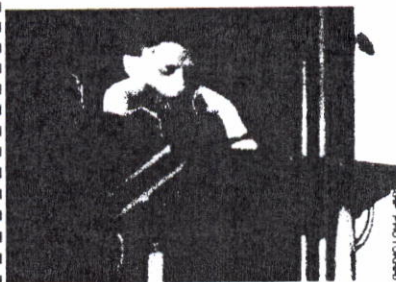
Adopted from CNN and BBC online by Valerian



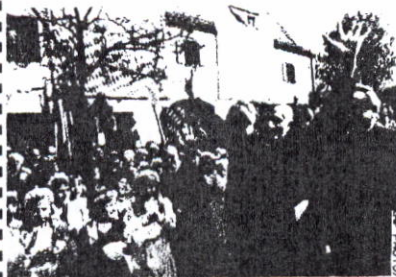
Joseph Ratzinger was born April 16, 1927, in Marktl am Inn, a town in southern Germany. His father was a police officer who came from a family of farmers. Here, Ratzinger is pictured in his German army uniform during World War II after he was drafted in 1943. He served for a time in an anti-aircraft unit that tracked Allied bombing raids. He deserted in the waning months of the war and returned to Traunstein, where he had grown up. U.S. troops took him prisoner, but he was released in June 1945. He returned to his hometown and resumed his studies as a seminarian.



Ratzinger was ordained as a priest in 1951 after studying philosophy and theology at the University of Munich and at another school in Freising. Here he poses with his family following his ordination, standing with his brother, George, left. Seated from left are his sister, Maria, his mother, Maria, and his father, Josef. In 1953, he received his doctorate in theology and four years later, he was qualified as a university teacher, teaching dogma and fundamental theology at four German universities.



As a young priest, Ratzinger was on the progressive side of theological debates and served under Cardinal Josef Frings, the reform-minded archbishop of Cologne, Germany. Here, he lectures in Freising in 1955. Later, he served as a consultant to Frings during Vatican II in 1962.



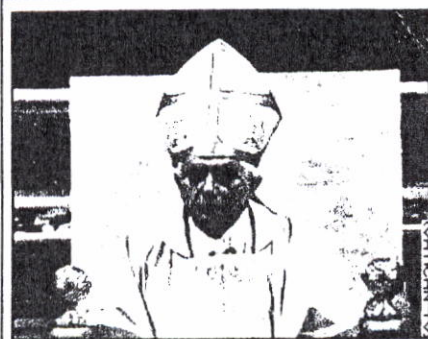
In March 1977, Pope Paul VI named Ratzinger archbishop of Munich and Freising and elevated him to cardinal a month later. He was the first diocesan priest after 80 years to take over the pastoral ministry of the large Bavarian diocese. Here, the new archbishop greets hundreds of well-wishers on his arrival in Munich on May 23, 1977.



Ratzinger waves to a cheering crowd during his farewell walk February 28, 1982, in downtown Munich before leaving to head the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith at the Vatican in Rome.



Ratzinger appears with Pope John Paul II during a Mass in St. Peter's Basilica in 2002. Pope John Paul II nominated Ratzinger to be the prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in 1981, a position he held until being elected pope Tuesday.



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Once the archbishop of Munich and for many years prefect of the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith, Ratzinger, 78, was widely acknowledged as a leading theologian before the College of Cardinals elected him as the successor to John P. Ratzinger served for 20 years as his chief theological adviser. As a young priest he was on the progressive side of theological debates but shifted to the right after the student revolutions of 1968. In the Vatican, he has been the driving force behind crackdowns on liberation theology, religious pluralism, challenges to traditional moral teachings on issues such as homosexuality, and dissent on such issues as women's ordination. The dean of the College of Cardinals since November 2002, he was elevated to cardinal by Pope Paul VI in June 1977.



Ratzinger prepares for communion at the funeral Mass for Pope John Paul II at the Vatican. As part of the Vatican leadership, Ratzinger has been the driving force behind Vatican crackdowns on the liberation theology movement, religious pluralism, challenges to traditional church teachings on such issues as homosexuality, and calls for the ordination of women.

Valerian's Diary

Why? Why? Why! A million of this word is asked every day. Life is a mystery that many whys? Pass unanswered hence for consolation you loose control of your own destiny, you are swallowed up in structures set by the society, and you no longer take notice of the world around you. A friend once wrote after viewing some photographs, 'if we are too busy, worried or distracted we may not see the beauty that is everywhere, simple detailed elements of everyday life'.

Many of us have made our worlds so familiar that we do not see it any more.

We are driven by structures laid high institutions we live in, we sometime adhere to this structures till we loose the sense of our own being, you walk because you can, you see because the eyes are open, your body is driven by forces you no longer understand. And especially in this time of information technology we are always on the move or communicating. Soon some fingers might just stick on the

mobile phones. At the end of the day, do you ever ask yourself what did I see? Because what you see determines how and who you will be. Each single expression of life has a spark of beauty and that beauty will go unnoticed if your eyes are close and heart heavy with many whys. We assume too readily that we share the one world with other people. At a deeper level, each person is the custodian and a completely private, individual world.

Do ask yourself 'in what way do I behold the world?'

We are so engrossed in the daily routine that we no longer recognise the sense in our existence. Many would curse each day as the dawn sets in, others would rejoice and thank God, while others would flow with the wind since they never know what goes on a round, and others ever confused.

Do you ever take a minute each day and ask why you exist in this world?

To be born is to be chosen. When you understand this con-

cept then the many whys will decrease because in all that happens in our lives no one is here by chance or accident, each one of us was sent here for a special destiny. You could have so many whys? In life, because you were not consulted on major questions that shape your destiny, when you were to be born, where you would be born, to whom you would be born.

Imagine the difference it would have made to your life if you had been born into the next door.

What matter is that you are here, which means a special destiny was prepared for you. You would answer the many whys by expressing and maximising on the freedom and creativity given to you to go beyond the given, the freedom to choose your friends and forge your identity. *Live life, as you feel comfortable.* The many whys? Linger in your mind because in expressing that special gift you bring to the world, with it comes suffering and pain that can neither be neither accounted for nor explained. At this stage many Whys have

gone unanswered, but life goes on, we still live, endure all the suffering and pain, enjoy all the good moments, and receive love and recognition. We still wonder if all the decisions we have made are right. We have to learn to let go some aspect in life that make us unhappy. Before his death, Fr John Hannon once told me, 'let not the past make you unhappy but look into the future'. We can shape the future because we have the freedom, sometimes there is need to be selfish in decision making because we are born single, before you arrived, your individuality was already carefully prepared, we are the wonderful artistic creation of God. Each one of us is unique. Take a look around and see yourself so that the whys can be avoided and if they are unavoidable then you will find the answers. Life is what you make it.

Reflection on existence with, John O'Donohue in his book 'anam cara'

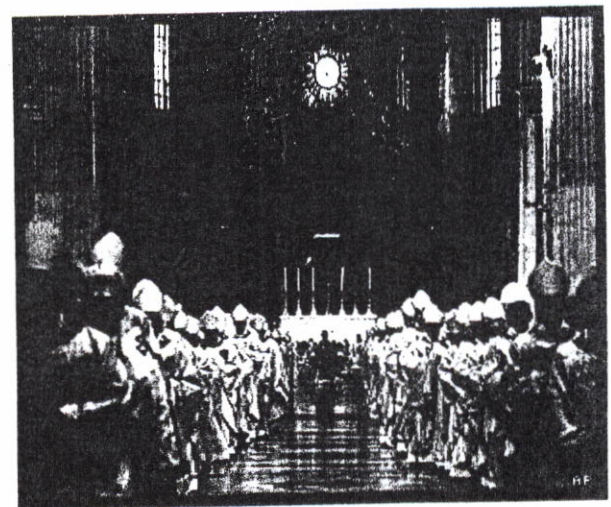
THE REAPER

He struck in broad day light
 As everybody went about their vocations
 Oblivious of the dark hungry-clawed descending
 What could they have done had they known
 Higher power had willed.

He went about leisurely, pricking
 Pricking and prodding seeking the ripe, the hardened
 He came about around mine and whipped his scythe
 As the umbilical cord the joint was severed
 I felt it not, being so numb
 I trundled slovenly homebound
 No ominous feeling or sign of my other's exit
 As I drew near, I heard them, shrill wails
 Yes, he had taken his final sting
 A sting that rang so familiar - so painfully familiar

The situation looked, sounded, felt familiar
 Yes, it had happened before - four fateful summers previously
 They had restrained her only with strokes of lash
 It was like wrapping an irritated bee in a cloth
 And suddenly, it had stung with wrath
 With poison so venomous
 I peeped and saw her, cord on throat, coil, white, and peacefully still. She
 Whom I had broken the fourth time.

Simbarashe Shaka (ctie)



A new POPE is elected

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