

Five minutes with the pope

The Catholic Review posed the question, “If you had five minutes with Pope Benedict XVI, would what you say to him?”

Bonnie Phipps

President, CEO

St. Agnes Hospital, Baltimore

“Pope Benedict, it is a great honor to welcome you to the United States. Your leadership and message to Catholics and to the United Nations will be a wonderful encouragement to all of us who strive for a more just and loving world. Our mission, rooted in the loving ministry of Jesus as healer, is the driving force at St. Agnes Hospital. It is truly a privilege to serve all persons who are in need of our care with special attention to those poor and vulnerable. God bless you always.”

Therese Wilson Favors

Director

Office of African American Catholic Ministries

“In a humble way, I would want to share with His Holiness some insights on what it means to be an African-American Catholic in the United States today. After all, our history is full of stories of faith, dedication and challenge. Some sharing would be made on the debilitating effects of racism, hoping that the church would continue efforts in addressing racism. A great ending would be to share some unique stories of evangelization such as “Operation Faith Lift” in Baltimore, “The Evangelization Intensive” in Chicago and “Cast Your Net” in New Orleans.”

Mary Pat Seurkamp

President

College of Notre Dame of Maryland, Baltimore

“After inviting the Holy Father to visit the first Catholic college for women in the United States, I would share with him how American Catholic colleges reach out to under-served members of our communities – just as our foundresses, the School Sisters of Notre Dame, focused on educating girls and young women. More than a century later, College of Notre Dame of Maryland continues to offer students the opportunity to pursue knowledge and truth within that essential context of faith.”

Dr. Kirk Gaddy,

Principal

St. Katharine School, Baltimore

“I would ask the pope to really use all his spiritual influence to help convince the presidents of all the countries of the world to end the war in Iraq. I’d also ask him for his help to deal with the AIDS crisis and to erase the debt of third-world countries. We need economic justice for poor countries.”

Richard J. Dowling

Executive Director

Maryland Catholic Conference

“I had something eloquent in mind when I met Pope John Paul II during his Baltimore visit, but blew it when we were face to face. All I could mutter was, “God bless you, Holy Father.” It’s likely I’d be all but dumb-struck in Pope Benedict’s presence, as well. I’d be better off handing him a note. It’d probably ask him to pray for a just transformation of our troubled world, and maybe to invite the Blessed Virgin’s intervention in Maryland and U.S. public-policy matters.”

Christopher Weber,

Director

Catholic Education Ministries of Central Maryland

“It is difficult to imagine the challenges and responsibilities that you face every day.

What aspects of your papal ministry do you find the most difficult? What parts of your ministry give you the most joy?"

Cindi Ritter

Director

Pregnancy Center North

Thank you for your devotion to the preservation of God's gift of life. Preserving life is advocated daily at the Pregnancy Center North (recently celebrating its 25th year). Serving over 700 clients annually, the center provides hope and helps women choose life. Run by mostly Catholic volunteers, it is sustained with monetary and material donations. Right here in Baltimore, lives are being saved and positively affected by truth and love. Please remember us in prayer that we may continue to serve.

I have the honor to remain Your Holiness' obedient servant.

Hannah Guerin

Student/junior

Maryvale Preparatory School, Brooklandville

"If I had five minutes with Pope Benedict, I would want to know if he ever felt overwhelmed by the people who just want to meet him; or by the choices he has to make in leading the Catholic Church; if he ever feels that politics have become too big a part of our faith and if he had any regrets in his life. Finally, I would ask him if there was ever a moment he doubted his faith or if he knew why he felt so close to God."

Caroline Langrall

Student/junior

Maryvale Preparatory School

"If I had five minutes with Pope Benedict, I would ask him what he thinks about the

role of religion in modern life. I think that today religion is not something that is on the minds of very many people, and I think it would be interesting to hear his opinion about why that is. I would also ask him what he thinks about ways to improve the quality of religious life today.”