

Statement of Cardinal William H. Keeler on the Election of Pope Benedict XVI

Cardinal William H. Keeler, Archbishop of Baltimore, issued the following statement from the Sistine Chapel in Rome, Italy, at 4:45 p.m. EDT.

“Today, Pope Benedict XVI began his service as Bishop of Rome and Successor of the Apostle Peter. After the election we cardinals went to him, one by one. I conveyed to him the love of the people of Baltimore and he responded in English, ‘We must keep praying for each other.’

Since 1983, the first time I went to Rome as a bishop, I have known him, but in 1989, when Pope John Paul II invited the archbishops of the United States and the officers of our bishops’ conference to Rome, our relationship has grown closer. When I served as Vice-President and then President of our Conference (1989-1995), I met with him several times each year and found him to be understanding and supportive in many situations. His command of English- and of Italian- is excellent.

Please join me in praying that the Lord bless his ministry as he did today, in the enthusiastic and faith-filled response of God’s people in Rome to their new Bishop.

I look forward to celebrating a Mass of Thanksgiving at the Cathedral of Mary Our Queen on May 1 at 11 a.m., in which I can reflect further on the gifts which our new Holy Father brings to his ministry to the whole Church.”