

Drawing Aside the Purple Curtain

The Papal System Today: an Analysis of the News

Francis Denies Benedict the Usual Papal Funeral

Shaun Willcock

We always knew that Francis, the Jesuit pope, did not like Benedict XVI, the so-called pope emeritus, despite all those photo ops which showed the two men embracing and smiling and acting like big buddies. Benedict was a traditionalist when it came to Roman Catholic doctrine, and Francis is a liberal. And the coup against Benedict in 2013 (for that is what it was) was a Jesuit manoeuvre so that one of their own could become pope of Rome, and turn the Roman Catholic institution on its head.

But one would have thought that when Benedict died in December, Francis – now free of him entirely – would at least go through the motions of following Vatican protocol and procedure when a pope dies, and use the opportunity to tell the world what a great guy Benedict was, etc. Not a bit of it. Francis took the opportunity of the papal funeral to give vent to his dislike of and opposition to the old pope, in ways which brought into sharp focus the true nature of the man. Francis the Jesuit is not only wily, cunning, and deceitful, but also vindictive, petty, and downright nasty. Behind his smiling, grandfatherly demeanour there is an iron ruthlessness towards his enemies.

Not only did he prevent the Vatican from giving Benedict the usual state funeral for Roman popes; not only was he unwilling to declare a period of official mourning; but he even scaled down the burial rites. He personally intervened to prevent Benedict's coffin from being carried on the shoulders of the pallbearers to St Peter's Basilica, instead giving orders that the body be transported by minivan. One insider said this was "denying him a worthy hearse."¹

Francis wanted an "abbreviated" funeral, and he also did not want an official period of mourning for Benedict, nor for the body to lie in state for an extended period. No bells were rung either, which was another break with the usual policy. "The funeral mass was also deliberately timed for 9:30 a.m., as this would render it difficult for many faithful who were planning to come to the service from different parts of Italy to travel to Rome." And no official holiday was declared by the Vatican for its employees to attend the funeral.

Furthermore, Francis only made one brief reference to Benedict in his funeral sermon. All he said was, "Benedict, faithful friend of the Bridegroom, may your joy be complete as you hear his voice, now and forever!" Various cardinals expressed anger and bewilderment at Francis' contempt towards Benedict in this sermon. Some who attended the requiem mass declared that it was "a treatment that would not be reserved even for one's worst enemy." An Eastern Orthodox writer, Rod Dreher, a former Roman Catholic, wrote: "Francis barely mentioned the man we were burying – only at the end, as if to say goodbyes. He could have delivered this homily for his butler."

What's more, Francis planned to leave as soon as some people in the congregation began shouting in Italian, "Make Benedict a saint immediately!" His excuse was that it was too cold for him. A monsignor had to persuade Francis to remain in St Peter's Square while the body was being taken into St Peter's Basilica. Even so, Francis refused to join the procession to the papal tombs in the Vatican grottoes for the final part of the funeral rites and the interment of the body. Instead, a cardinal presided over the service.

The deliberate coldness was demonstrated in other ways as well. The Vatican sent letters to embassies of various countries, requesting that they *not* send official delegations to the funeral. It only invited the heads of state of Germany (Benedict was a German) and Italy!

Then, just four days after the funeral, Francis met with Georg Gänswein, Benedict's longtime personal secretary. The reason for the meeting was because Gänswein was about to have a book published, describing his years of service to Benedict; and according to a preview of the text published

by Reuters, it would provide details about Benedict's disagreements with Francis over such issues as the restrictions Francis placed on the traditional Latin mass, as well as abortion, homosexuality, and married priests.² The Jesuit magazine *America* described the book this way: "Gänswein reveals previously unknown details of some of the biggest hiccups and bad blood that accrued during the last 10 years in which Benedict lived as a retired pope alongside Francis following his 2013 decision to retire".³

The Vatican released no details about the meeting. But rumours were flying as to what Francis would do with Gänswein now that Benedict was dead, and after the publication of Gänswein's book.

Obviously Francis was very jealous of his predecessor's popularity. Although at the time of his stepping down he was not considered one of the most popular popes of modern times, Benedict's popularity grew as Francis' own pontificate, which had begun on a wave of immense popularity, waned in the esteem and affection of multiplied millions of Roman Catholics the world over. They began to look with nostalgia at the Benedict pontificate, which, however cold and distant it might have appeared at the time, was at least orthodox according to Roman Catholic doctrine. Roman Catholics saw in Benedict a defender of orthodox, traditional Romanism. The years of Francis' pontificate have filled them with fear and foreboding, as the wily Jesuit makes massive changes to orthodoxy, jettisoning centuries of tradition beloved to traditionalist Papists, embracing things considered heretical until now, and acting more as a radical Green and a Communist than as the defender of the centuries-old Roman Catholic faith.

The same inside source quoted above said, "We had planned for the minivan to make a brief halt in front of Casa Santa Marta to symbolize the continuity between the two popes and to honor Francis as the reigning pope, but at the last moment, Francis said he no longer wanted it. The jealousy is really bad."

Well, Benedict is gone. There is only one pope in the Vatican now. The Jesuit coup which began in 2013 is much strengthened now, and Francis' power is greatly consolidated.

January 2023

Shaun Willcock is a minister, author and researcher. He runs Bible Based Ministries. For other articles (which may be downloaded and printed), as well as details about his books, audio messages, pamphlets, etc., please visit the Bible Based Ministries website; or write to the address below. If you would like to be on Bible Based Ministries' email list, to receive all future articles, please send your details.

Bible Based Ministries

info@biblebasedministries.co.uk

www.biblebasedministries.co.uk

This article may be copied for free distribution if it is copied in full

ENDNOTES:

1. *Church Militant*, January 6, 2023. "Francis Sabotages Benedict's Funeral Service." www.churchmilitant.com.
2. *Catholic News Agency*, January 9, 2023. "Pope Francis meets with Benedict XVI's longtime secretary, Archbishop Gänswein." [Www.catholicnewsagency.com](http://www.catholicnewsagency.com).
3. *America*, January 9, 2023. "Pope Francis has private audience with longtime Benedict aide amid tell-all book fallout." www.americamagazine.org.