

The first papal resignation in nearly 600 years shocked the Church and the world. Oblates of the Virgin Mary blogged, posted, and tweeted about the event. They were also approached by the secular media and appeared on-line, in newspapers, and on television. The resignation of Pope Benedict XVI is our main story for this issue of the Monthly Media Monitor.

Fr. Guy Simard, OMV is now a published author -- his blog is now a book!

We also feature a quote from the pope's last Angelus.



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of the Oblates of the Virgin Mary

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POPE RESIGNS



In this image taken from EWTN and Vatican TV on Thursday, February 28 at 8:00 p.m. Rome time (2:00 p.m. Eastern Time), crowds stand silent after the Swiss Guards closed the doors of the papal residence at Castel Gandolfo, marking the official end of Pope Benedict's pontificate. Commentators said they had never seen anything like this moment -- it was truly stunning in both its simplicity and its historic import. Earlier in the day, His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI has one last meeting with the College of Cardinals. The now-Roman Pontiff Emeritus urged the cardinals to work together "like an orchestra where diversity, an expression of the universal Church, always works toward a higher and harmonious agreement."

"A surprise -- like thunder that gives no notice it's coming."

That is how Francis Cardinal Arinze summarized his own reaction and that of his fellow cardinals to the resignation of Pope Benedict XVI.

At a consistory of cardinals which, by all accounts, was not out of the ordinary, the pope made a sudden and even shocking announcement -- that due to deteriorating health he would be stepping down from the papacy effective

8:00 p.m. Rome time on Thursday, February 28.

The transition occurred yesterday when the pope said his last goodbyes and flew off in a helicopter as millions around the world watched on-line and on television. It concluded a memorable three weeks during which Oblates of the Virgin Mary tweeted, blogged, and posted about the event. Oblates were also interviewed and featured in newspapers, on-line, and on television.

It all started on February 10 with an announcement to

a small group of cardinals gathered at the Vatican. On the morning of Monday, February 11, the news was released to the Church and the world.

This author, at the encouragement of others, had just started an Oblate of the Virgin Mary Twitter account. I was logging onto to Twitter for perhaps only the fourth time in my life when Vatican Radio tweeted these words at 6:13 a.m. Eastern Time: "Pope announces he will resign at end of month." The words were so startling that at

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Fr. Jeremy Paulin, OMV, answers questions in this image taken from Channel 9 News.

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first it seemed that it might be a joke. Calling the rector of the community (Fr. Peter Grover, OMV) resulted in the conclusion that we needed to “wait and see” to make sure this was really true. But by 6:25 a.m., various news sources, including the BBC, were picking up the story. It became quite clear that the story, as unbelievable as it seemed, was true. The vice rector of the house (Fr. Tom Carzon, OMV) and the provincial (Fr. Dave Nicgorski, OMV) were contacted immediately.

Oblates of the Virgin Mary who have Facebook pages went to work -- posting the amazing news and including links to various reports and videos. Many Oblates fielded questions from lay people -- Can the pope really do this? Why is he doing it? Was he forced to step down? What will we call the pope after he steps down? Where will he live? Some of these questions could be answered while others could not.

The event was greatly complicated by the fact that even Vatican insiders had little or no idea what to do in this situation. Tarcisio Cardinal Bertone, the Cardinal Secretary of State and Camerlengo, was asked at that time what the pope would be called after he resigns. He could only respond that he personally thought he should be called the bishop emeritus of Rome, but added “we don’t know...they are still discussing it.”

Meanwhile, the secular media scrambled to get reactions from various Oblates of the Virgin

Mary. In Denver, Fr. Jeremy Paulin, OMV, our vocation director, was going to early morning Mass when he was unexpectedly approached by Denver’s Channel 9 News. He was interviewed and gave his reaction to the surprising announcement.

The next day, DenverPost.com released a video featuring not just one but two other Oblates of the Virgin Mary. Pastor Fr. Chris Uhl, OMV was shown during his homily as he addressed the faithful about the papal resignation and what it means. Fr. Mike Warren, OMV, parochial vicar, was interviewed extensively about the resignation, his reaction, and what usually happens during a papal transition.



Top to bottom: Fr. Chris Uhl, OMV and Fr. Mike Warren, OMV comment on the pope’s resignation in these images taken from DenverPost.com.

This author (Fr. John Wykes, OMV) spotted an error in The National Post, Canada’s national newspaper, and sent a correction to the writer of the article. The writer responded with thanks and so did the editor. The letter, correctly stating that there have been at least three popes that have come from outside of Europe, was published in the next’s day’s National Post.

During the next two weeks, the shock of the resignation subsided and prayers continued for the Holy Father. Parish, shrine, and

chapel bulletins featured request for prayers for the pope, and the omvusa provincial website kept up with the latest news.

On February 22, it was announced, perhaps erroneously, that Benedict XVI would be addressed as “His Holiness, Benedict XVI, bishop emeritus of Rome.” Four days later, Fr. Lombardi, director of the Vatican Press Office, indicated that the former pope’s new title would be Benedict XVI, Roman Pontiff Emeritus or Pope Emeritus.

On February 25, the pope signed a motu proprio, allowing, among other things, the cardinals to begin the conclave earlier than usual if all cardinal electors are in Rome at the time.

Two days later, Benedict XVI held his last General Audience. He said, “I will continue to accompany the Church with my prayers.” The prolonged applause continued even after the pope had left the square.

On February 28, Saint Francis Chapel in Boston held a special Holy Hour beginning at 2:00 p.m. (to coincide with the all-important 8:00 p.m. hour in Rome). A number of other OMV parishes and shrines offered their prayers as well. The pope said his last goodbyes. Then the doors of Castel Gandolfo were closed at 8:00 p.m. as millions watched on television and on-line. The Church and the world transitioned to the state of “Sede Vacante” as it awaited the conclave to elect the next pope.





Pope Benedict XVI says goodbye to the crowds during his last General Audience on February 27. Image from ctonews.ca

Media Quote of the Month

I offer a warm and affectionate greeting to the English-speaking pilgrims and visitors who have joined me for this, my last General Audience...

During this Year of Faith, we have been called to renew our joyful trust in the Lord's presence in our lives and in the life of the Church. I am personally grateful for his unfailing love and guidance... I am also deeply grateful for the understanding, support and prayers of so many of you, not only here in Rome, but also throughout the world.

The decision I have made, after much prayer, is the fruit of a serene trust in God's will and a deep love of Christ's Church. I will continue to accompany the Church with my prayers, and I ask each of you to pray for me and for the new Pope. In union with Mary and all the saints, let us entrust ourselves in faith and hope to God, who continues to watch over our lives and to guide the journey of the Church and our world along the paths of history.

- The message of Pope Benedict XVI during his last General Audience, February 27, 2013. Copyright 2013 Libreria Editrice Vaticana

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Fr. Guy's Blog Is Now A New Book!

For about one year now, Fr. Guy Simard, OMV, has been building up his blog on the Internet. It has received a favorable response from many people. Now, the French-Canadian Oblate is having his blog published.

Éditions Croix du Salut, based in Germany, has agreed to print and publish the volume entitled "Dieu ma joie" ("God My Joy").

"About one year ago," Guy says on the cover of his new book, "one of my youngest parishioners convinced me to start a blog on internet. I have answered this call, but I would have never imagined how

thrilling this adventure would be and how many people would be touched by it.

"The blog allows me to share with a large public, my intuitions and my convictions about religious matters. So far, 16715 pages have been seen on my blog (since then, the statistics are a bit higher: 18213 pages seen) which is a solid proof that my texts do some good to the people.

"I thank the publisher: Éditions Croix du Salut for having got in touch with me and for having offered me to print my blog so that it would do even more good around the world. I entrust this book to the Holy Virgin Mary,

the Mother of all believers. Have a good reading !"

We will certainly have a good reading, Fr. Guy, and we look forward to reading your book!



Last month's images from the Provincial Video Archives: Fr. Dave Yankauskas celebrates his First Mass (1989), Seán Cardinal O'Malley gives homily at Mass which begins Perpetual Eucharistic Adoration at St. Clement's (2009), Opening Title from OMV promo video "To Proclaim Mercy" (1986), Fr. Greg Short, OMV gives a talk for the Spirituality Series (1998), a scene from a St. Clement Christmas Play (1988), OMV's take Final Vows (1988), Fr. John Paul Klein, OMV is interviewed for a special video on St. Mary's (1995), priests walk from St. Mary's rectory to the church for a special centenary celebration for the parish founded in 1858 (1958).