

# *Former Pope Benedict XVI lies in state at St. Peter's Basilica*

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**At the Vatican, tens of thousands of people have paid final respects to Pope Benedict as he lay in state in St. Peter's Basilica. Benedict died on Saturday at the age of 95.**

Vatican City, January 3 (RHC)-- At the Vatican, tens of thousands of people have paid final respects to Pope Benedict as he lay in state in St. Peter's Basilica. Benedict died on Saturday at the age of 95.

In 2013, Benedict shocked the Catholic Church when he became the first pontiff to resign in almost 600 years. His tenure was marked by widening sexual abuse scandals in the Catholic Church.

A 2021 report found Benedict failed to act in at least four cases of sexual abuse by priests when he was the archbishop of Munich in Germany.

Pope Benedict was a fierce opponent of abortion, birth control and LGBTQ+ rights. He opposed reforms to the Catholic Church including allowing women to join the clergy, and as a cardinal, he led a campaign to stamp out liberation theology and to silence and expel priests who taught it.

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