

Key events of Benedict's papacy

Since taking office, Pope Benedict XVI has been faced with hot-button issues such as same-sex marriage, birth control, abortion, divorce, and religious instruction in schools, as well as a controversy over Islam

■ **Apr 19, 2005:** Cardinal **Joseph Ratzinger** elected Pope

■ **Jun:** Calls on Italians to boycott referendum seeking repeal of law on medically-assisted fertility. Vote defeated

■ **Aug:** First foreign visit of his papacy is to Germany for **Catholic Youth Day**

■ **Sep:** Criticises Canada for allowing same sex marriage and abortion

■ **Jan 25, 2006:** Pontiff releases his first encyclical, ***Deus Caritas Est*** – *God Is Love* – which surprises with its positive references to erotic love, albeit clearly limited to heterosexual marriages

■ **Feb:** Stance on Islam toughens with removal of highly respected Archbishop **Michael Fitzgerald** from post as president of *Pontifical Council for Inter-Religious Dialogue*. Experts suggest Fitzgerald is too soft on Islam

■ **Feb:** Names 15 new cardinals. Nominations from 11 countries suggest Benedict plans unusually open debate among Church leaders



■ **May:** Excommunicates two Chinese bishops ordained without his approval

■ **Sep:** Sparks protests throughout Muslim world by heavy-handedly quoting anti-Islamic remarks made by 14th century Byzantine Christian emperor **Paleologus** during lecture in Germany

■ **Nov:** Visits Turkey, his first visit to a predominantly Muslim country. Protests continue over his anti-Islamic remarks

■ **Apr 2:** Supports fast-track sainthood for **John Paul II** on second anniversary of his predecessor's death

■ **May 9-13:** Pope to visit Brazil – world's largest Roman Catholic country

