

Catholic Women's Ordination Press Release on the death of Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI 31 December 2022

Pope Benedict, who has died, sadly represented an exclusive male clerical, hierarchical church that forbade women even to discuss women's ordination. He went as far as to define the act of seeking women's ordination, an excommunicable offence during his time as pope, as a grave crime equal to clerical sexual abuse.

He resigned but continued to live in the Vatican, surrounded by clergy who supported his views. His powerful presence may have delayed some of the reforms that CWO still seeks. CWO continues to hope for an inclusive, truly synodal Church that welcomes women and men to use their gifts, including ordination, for the benefit of all.

As we pray for the repose of the soul of Pope Benedict, we pray too for all victims of clerical abuse for whom his death will be a trigger and for those women, throughout the world, whose vocations to the Catholic priesthood continue to be dismissed and blocked.