St Mary's University Twickenham London

Benedict XVI Centre for Religion, Ethics and Society

Call for Papers

Joseph Ratzinger / Benedict XVI: A Centenary Celebration

St Mary's University, Twickenham, London
23–25 June 2027

In June 2027, St Mary's University will host an international conference to mark the centenary of the birth of Joseph Ratzinger (Pope Benedict XVI), one of the most influential Catholic theologians of our time.

Over more than six decades, Joseph Ratzinger made significant contributions to a wide range of theological disciplines, including biblical interpretation, Christology, ecclesiology, liturgy and sacramental theology, fundamental theology, and eschatology. His work was marked by a sustained engagement with the Christian theological tradition and with the intellectual and cultural challenges of the modern world. As a theological adviser at the Second Vatican Council and subsequently as a theologian, bishop and pope, he played a significant role in the Council's reception and interpretation.

The conference seeks to explore the richness and significance of his theological legacy, bringing together established scholars and emerging researchers from around the world. It will provide an opportunity for critical engagement with his thought, its intellectual and historical sources, its reception, and its relevance for contemporary theology and the life and mission of the Church.

The conference has a particular resonance for St Mary's University, which Pope Benedict XVI visited during his historic Apostolic Visit to the United Kingdom in September 2010. The centenary offers an opportunity to revisit his theological vision and to consider its enduring significance for the relationship between faith, reason and culture. The conference is held under the patronage of the Joseph Ratzinger–Benedict XVI Vatican Foundation.

The event will open on Wednesday 23 June with Mass in the University Chapel at 5.30 pm, at which Archbishop Richard Moth, the Chancellor of St Mary's University, will be principal celebrant and preacher. This will be followed by a public keynote lecture delivered by Professor Tracey Rowland and a reception.

The academic conference on Thursday 24 and Friday 25 June will feature keynote lectures by Professor Helmut Hoping, Professor Isabel C. Troconis and Professor Maurice Ashley Agbaw-Ebai, alongside contributed papers and a dedicated session for doctoral researchers. The programme will also include a round-table discussion entitled *Modern Thought Baptized*, taking its title from the forthcoming book on Joseph Ratzinger by Professor Jacob Phillips.

Invitation for Papers

We invite proposals for papers addressing any aspect of the theology, intellectual development, historical context, sources, reception or continuing legacy of Joseph Ratzinger / Benedict XVI. Papers may focus on particular texts, theological questions, historical developments or comparative perspectives. Contributions offering critical assessments of Ratzinger's theology, as well as constructive engagements with his thought, are especially welcome.

A dedicated session will be reserved for doctoral researchers. We particularly encourage proposals from doctoral students whose research engages with Joseph Ratzinger / Benedict XVI or with theological questions closely related to his work.

Submission Guidelines

Proposals should include:

- Proposed paper title
- Abstract of no more than 300 words
- Brief academic biography of no more than 150 words

Papers should be prepared for a 25-minute presentation, followed by discussion.

Those wishing to be considered for the dedicated doctoral session should indicate their status as doctoral researchers when submitting their proposals.

The conference language will be English.

Important Dates

Deadline for submission of abstracts: 31 January 2027

Notification of acceptance: 1 March 2027

Please send proposals to Fr Michael Lang at michael.lang@stmarys.ac.uk.

Registration and Further Information

Further information about registration, accommodation, conference fees and the full programme will be made available in due course.

We look forward to welcoming scholars from around the world to St Mary's University for this celebration of the theological work and legacy of Joseph Ratzinger / Benedict XVI.