

German Government ‘Moved’ by Pope Benedict’s Resignation

The German government said it was “moved and touched” by the surprise resignation of German-born Pope Benedict on Monday.

“As a Christian and as a Catholic, one can’t help but be moved and touched by this,” government spokesman Steffen Seibert said at a regular government news conference.

“The German government has the highest respect for the Holy Father, for what he has done, for his contributions over the course of his life to the Catholic church. He has been at the head of the Catholic Church for nearly eight years. He has left a very personal signature as a thinker at the head of the Church, and also as a shepherd. Whatever the reasons for this decision, they must be respected,” Seibert added.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel is to make a statement on the matter at 2:30 p.m. (8:30 a.m. ET).

Reporting by Noah Barkin and Stephen Brown

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