

Pope Asks for Support After Decision to Resign, Says Strength Diminishing

Pope Benedict, in his first public comments since he announced that he would become the first pontiff in centuries to **resign**, on Wednesday said he was certain that the Roman **Catholic Church** would be sustained by **God** and the faithful despite its difficulties.

Speaking at his general audience, one of the last public appearances before his February 28 **resignation**, the pontiff said he was aware of the gravity of his decision but also of his diminishing physical and spiritual strength.

He said he was certain the Church will sustain him with prayer and that **Christ** would continue to guide it.

Reporting By Philip Pullella

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