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Complexity in the legacy of Benedict



Ross Douthat

OPINION

The first pope to resign was Celestine V, born Pietro Da Morrone, who was living the life of a pious hermit when he was elevated to the papacy in 1294, in his 80s, to break a two-year deadlock in the College of Cardinals. Feeling overmastered by the job, he soon resigned in the expectation that he could return to his monastic existence. Instead, he was imprisoned by his successor, Boniface VIII, who feared that some rival faction might make Celestine an antipope.

The former pontiff died after about a year in captivity; his successor, one of the most ambitious of medieval popes, eventually fell into a disastrous struggle with the king of France that ended with Boniface temporarily imprisoned in the weeks before his death.

The strange afterlife of Pope Benedict XVI's pontificate, which ended with his death on Saturday at 95, was not quite so wild or dramatic. But like Celestine's experience it was not exactly an advertisement for papal resignations. For almost a decade the former Joseph Ratzinger played a peculiar and poorly defined role as "pope emeritus," neither fully secluded nor formally active, even as his successor, Francis, sought to dismantle important parts of his work.

The former pope promised to live out his days "hidden from the world" and presumably expected to see his legacy secure. Instead, he conducted a post-papacy of ambiguous gestures in response to a Vatican that had been delivered, by the mysteries of God's providence, to his longtime foes.

Looking back to what I wrote upon his retirement in 2013 is a strange experience, because much of that analysis ceased to apply within just a few years of the resignation. At the time, I argued that Benedict, as pope and earlier as John Paul II's doctrinal chief, had worked tirelessly to prevent the ruptures that followed the Second Vatican Council — the collapse of Mass attendance in the Western world, the wars over liturgy and sexual ethics —

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The New York Times publishes opinion from a wide range of perspectives in hopes of promoting constructive debate about consequential questions.



The waterfront in the Turkish resort town of Antalya. The influx of tens of thousands of Russians and Ukrainians has begun to transform the historic city and alter its social fabric.

Settling in a Turkish town

ANTALYA DISPATCH
ANTALYA, TURKEY

Russians and Ukrainians are starting new lives on the Mediterranean coast

BY BEN HUBBARD AND SAKAF TIMUR

The ice cream man grappled with how much the war in Ukraine had changed his neighborhood.

So many Russians had moved to Antalya, a resort city in southern Turkey, that local families were being priced out of their homes. Russian co-working spaces, hair salons and other businesses were using signs in Russian to advertise their services.

And Russians clearly outnumbered Turks in the park where the ice cream vendor worked — pushing their children on the playground swings, doing video conferences with faraway places from the park benches and, thankfully, buying lots of ice cream.

"It is as if one morning we woke up and we no longer heard any Turkish words. It's all Russian," said the vendor, Kaan Devran Ozturk, 23. "Turks feel like strangers in their own country."

Russia's invasion of Ukraine has sent huge numbers of people fleeing from both countries, and tens of thousands of



At a weekly outdoor market in Antalya, Russian shoppers nearly outnumbered Turks, as Turkish and Russian women jostled with one another to find the best produce.

them have ended up in this historic city on the so-called Turkish Riviera, where they are settling in as the conflict rages back home.

They include draft dodgers from both sides of the war and Russians who have fallen afoul of their government, as well as those who oppose the war or who fear economic trouble at home and have taken advantage of Turkey's open borders

and relatively easy residency requirements to start new lives in a warmer, sunnier climate.

While Russians have long flocked to Antalya's beaches for summer vacations, and some Russians lived here year-round, the influx this past year has dramatically increased their numbers, and their presence in neighborhoods where they were not often seen before.

They have brought lots of much-needed foreign currency into Turkey, helping keep its economy afloat, but their new Turkish neighbors grumble about skyrocketing housing prices and wonder how long these new residents will stay, potentially altering the social fabric.

"As they are now settled, they are visible," said Ismail Caglar, the head of an Antalya real estate association. "They stroll down the beach with their children. They sit down at a cafe with their children. They are everywhere."

He said that the size of the influx over the past year had caused housing prices to triple and allowed Russian real estate brokers to charge property owners, mainly Russians, exorbitant fees and cut out their Turkish competitors.

"People think they are tourists and will go back after the war," he said. "I don't believe that because Antalya is really like heaven. Look at the weather! Where is there weather like this in Russia?"

In September, the governor of Antalya Province, which includes the city and surrounding areas, said that the number of foreign residents in his jurisdiction had more than doubled in two years, to more than 177,000. That included more than 50,000 Russians and 18,000 Ukrainians.

In November, foreigners bought more TURKEY, PAGE 4

After China, globalization may lead to Mexico

MEXICO CITY

To cut reliance on Asia, some U.S. companies are moving production south

BY PETER S. GOODMAN

As American companies recalibrate the risks of relying on Chinese factories to make their goods, some are shifting business to a country far closer to home: Mexico.

The unfolding trend known as "near-shoring" has drawn the attention of no less than Walmart, the global retail empire with headquarters in Arkansas.

Early last year, when Walmart needed \$1 million of company uniforms — more than 50,000 in one order — it bought them not from its usual suppliers in China but from Preslow, a family-run apparel business in Mexico.

It was February 2022, and the contours of global trade seemed up for alteration. The worst pandemic in a century had upended shipping. The cost of transporting products across the Pacific had skyrocketed, and ports were choked with floating traffic jams — a stark indication of the dangers of depending on a single faraway country for critical goods.

Among multinational companies, decades of faith in the economic merits of making things in China had come under withering challenge, especially as animosity intensified between Washington and Beijing.

At his office in Mexico City, Isaac Presburger, director of sales at Preslow, took Walmart's order as a sign of his country's evolving role in the economy, and the opportunities that flow from sharing the same side of the Pacific with the United States.

"Walmart had a big problem with their supply," Mr. Presburger recounted. "They said, 'OK, Mexico, save me.'"

Basic geography is a driver for American companies moving business to Mexico. Shipping a container full of goods to the United States from China generally requires a month — a time frame that doubled and tripled during the worst disruptions of the pandemic. Yet factories in Mexico and retailers in the United States can be bridged within two weeks.

"Everybody who sources from China understands that there's no way to get around that Pacific Ocean — there's no technology for that," said Raine Mahdi, founder of Zipfox, a San Diego-based company that links factories in Mexico with American companies seeking alternatives to Asia. "There's always this push from customers: 'Can you get it here faster?'"

During the first 10 months of 2022, Mexico exported \$382 billion of goods to the United States, an increase of more than 20 percent over the same period in MEXICO, PAGE 7

'Wise grandfather' of faithful loyalists and critics



Conservatives in the Roman Catholic Church saw Benedict XVI as their intellectual and spiritual north star, a leader who upheld doctrine in the face of growing secularism.

Benedict XVI, first pope in centuries to resign, led church's conservative path

BY JASON HOROWITZ
AND ELISABETTA POVOLEDO

A pope's death customarily sets in motion a conclave to choose a new leader of the church. But Pope Benedict XVI's successor, Pope Francis, was named when Benedict stepped down in 2013, breaking with almost 600 years of tradition.

In a traditional New Year's Eve service held at the Vatican, Francis praised Benedict, saying, "With emotion, we remember his person, so noble, so kind. And we feel in our hearts so much gratitude."

Now, a sitting pope is expected to preside over the funeral of his predecessor — an extraordinary spectacle in the history of the church. The Vatican said on Saturday that Benedict's funeral would be held on Thursday in St. Peter's

Square, with Francis presiding. As is traditional, Benedict's body was to be laid in St. Peter's Basilica on Monday so that the faithful can file by to pay their respects.

Just like his predecessor, John Paul II, Benedict left behind a spiritual testament apologizing to "anyone I have wronged in any way."

He thanked his father, for his "lucid faith" that taught his children to believe; his brother, also a priest, for his judgment and guidance; and his sister, who took care of him for decades.

And he called on the faithful to "Stay steady in the faith."

He was a pope who always drew ardent loyalists, as well as strong detractors.

Even before his election as pope on April 19, 2005, church conservatives saw him as their intellectual and spiritual north star, a leader who, as a powerful Vatican official, upheld church doctrine in the face of growing secularism and pressure to change to get more people into the pews.

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