

Rome, February 22, 2013
Chair of Saint Peter

His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI
Vatican City
Rome

Dear Holy Father,

On this feast of the Chair of St. Peter, the Augustinians of the Assumption are united with you in heart and prayer. It was with sadness that we learned of your decision to step down from the See of Peter, even if we understand the profound reasons for it.

On behalf of all the Augustinians of the Assumption and myself, I want to convey to you our gratitude for the dedication and ardor which were yours during these years of service to our Holy Mother Church.

I give thanks to the Holy Spirit for guiding you throughout your ministry as bishop of Rome. You led the Catholic Church with wisdom and prudence. We were the beneficiaries of a far-sighted and perspicacious pastor and a caring father. The encyclicals that you wrote will remain lasting reference points to help believers on the way.

As you leave your duties, I wish, Most Holy Father, to reiterate to you our filial attachment and to assure you of our unwavering devotion. We entrust ourselves to your prayer and may we dare to ask you to maintain a special intention for our three brothers in the Congo (D.R.C.) who were kidnapped more than four months ago and about whom we are still without news?

Humbly, we ask for your fatherly blessing and continued loving care.

Very Rev. Benoît GRIÈRE A.A.
Superior general of the Augustinians of the Assumption