

JOSEPH RATZINGER
POPE
BENEDICT
XVI



JESUS

OF NAZARETH

HOLY WEEK:
FROM THE ENTRANCE INTO JERUSALEM
TO THE RESURRECTION

IGNATIUS

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PRESS RELEASE

Who killed Jesus?

Pope Benedict XVI probes the great questions surrounding the last week of Jesus' earthly life.

SAN FRANCISCO, Feb. XX, 2011 – The death of Jesus of Nazareth remains controversial, even after almost 2000 years. Pope Benedict XVI revisits the debate in his new book, *Jesus of Nazareth: Holy Week*, the second volume of his work on the figure of Jesus.

Some interpreters have identified the Jewish people as a whole as responsible for Jesus' death – a position often used to justify the persecution of Jews. Some modern scholars argue that the Roman authorities are to blame. Others claim that a group within the Jewish Temple establishment worked with the Roman authority to execute Jesus for insurrection, which is what the Gospel writers maintain. Benedict XVI directly confronts the arguments and the evidence.

"Many readers will find this section of the book particularly interesting as the Pope reviews the historical positions taken about this," said Fr. Joseph Fessio, founder and publisher of Ignatius Press. "He discusses some very controversial claims that have been made, and draws on some contemporary scholarly resources to reach a conclusion that I am certain will generate a lot of discussion."

Jesus of Nazareth: Holy Week – From the Entrance Into Jerusalem to the Resurrection will be available March 10 from Ignatius Press. It is the follow-up to the Pope's best-selling first volume, *Jesus of Nazareth: From the Baptism in the Jordan to the Transfiguration*.

In Part Two, the Pope tackles many of history's most volatile questions about the final week of Jesus' earthly life :

- Was Jesus a political revolutionary?
- Was he the Messiah, the Son of God?
- What did Jesus teach about the end of the world?
- Did Jesus establish a community of disciples—the Church—to continue his work?
- How did Jesus interpret his death?
- What does the evidence tell us about Jesus' ultimate fate? Did he really rise from the dead?
- Did the early Christians believe Jesus would return immediately?

Benedict answers those questions and more. The figure of Jesus that emerges from this study is of someone who is both divine and human; God's self-disclosure in his Son, who tells us about God but also about ourselves. "It's clear that what interests the Holy Father is helping people to know and love someone whom he knows and loves," Fr. Fessio said. "But he does this as a scholar. This book," he added, "is a bright star in the constellation of books about Jesus."

For more information about *Jesus of Nazareth: Holy Week*, to request a review copy or to schedule an interview with Ignatius Press Publisher Jesuit Fr. Joseph Fessio or others, please contact Alexis Walkenstein with The Maximus Group at 678-990-9032, or Christine Schicker at 404-610-8871.

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Christian tradition commemorates several significant events in the final week of Jesus' earthly life collectively known as Holy Week. In *Jesus of Nazareth: Holy Week*, Pope Benedict XVI focuses on the events that occurred from Palm Sunday through Jesus' Resurrection on the third day after he died on the cross.

Palm Sunday – Several days before his Crucifixion, Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a young donkey. Biblical accounts note that many of his followers laid their garments across the road for him to cross, while others spread “leafy branches.” Christian tradition recognizes these as palms.

In Chapter 10 of Mark's Gospel, it is reported that as Jesus rode into Jerusalem, “... those who went out before him and those who followed cried out, ‘Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!’” (Mark 10:9).

Holy Thursday – The day before his death, Jesus called his apostles together and began washing their feet – an ultimate sign, in those times, of service. They then dined together, and Jesus instituted the Holy Eucharist by giving his body and blood – his very self – in the form of bread and wine. “Do this,” he told them, “in memory of me.” During the Last Supper Jesus revealed that one of his twelve apostles – Judas – would betray him. Judas departed to bring the authorities to arrest Jesus.

After dinner Jesus went to the Garden of Gethsemane with the remaining apostles, there praying and suffering intensely in anticipation of what was to come. It was here that Judas led a group of soldiers to find and arrest Jesus.

Good Friday – Jesus was taken before Jewish leaders and tried, and also before the Roman ruler of the region, Pontius Pilate. As the Jewish feast of the Passover was at hand, Pilate then offered to release Jesus because it was custom that the Romans released a Jewish prisoner in observance of the holy time. The crowd refused, instead calling for the release of a murderous criminal, Barabbas.

Pilate ordered Jesus scourged. Soldiers fashioned a crown of thorns and pushed it on Jesus' head, and they wrapped him in a purple robe and mocked him as “the King of the Jews.” When Pilate asked what should be done with Jesus, the crowd chanted “Crucify him” repeatedly. Pilate, literally washing his hands in a symbol of disagreement, turned Jesus over to the Jewish leaders.

He was forced to carry his own cross through the streets to a place known as Golgotha (the place of the skull), and fell three times. Along the way, a man from Cyrene, Simon, was ordered to help Jesus with the cross. When they reached Golgotha, Jesus' feet and hands were nailed to the cross, and he was crucified between two criminals. He suffered three hours, during which the crowd and soldiers mocked him. When he told them he was thirsty, they gave him vinegar to drink. After three hours on the Cross, Jesus said, simply, “It is finished,” and died.

One of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and blood and water flowed from the wound. His body was taken down from the cross and turned over to Joseph of Arimathea, who sought to give Jesus a traditional Jewish burial in a tomb he owned nearby.

Easter Sunday – Early in the morning “of the first day of the week,” some of Jesus' disciples arrived at his tomb to find the stone rolled away and the tomb empty. On that day and for the next 40 days, the resurrected Jesus appeared to and interacted with many of his followers individually and in groups of various sizes. The resurrected Jesus was not a ghost or visionary apparition; he was a human being who had entered into a new mode of embodied existence.

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ABOUT THE BOOK

Jesus of Nazareth: Holy Week – From the Entrance Into Jerusalem to the Resurrection is the follow up to Pope Benedict XVI's best-selling book, *Jesus Of Nazareth: From the Baptism in the Jordan to the Transfiguration*.

In this new work, Benedict challenges readers to contemplate the meaning and impact of Jesus' life. He looks at the days from Jesus' arrival in Jerusalem – to the herald of followers – to his suffering and death a few days later ... and his resurrection and appearances to his apostles and other disciples for another 40 days.

The Holy Father tackles many of history's most volatile questions about the final week of Jesus' earthly life:

- Who killed Jesus?
- Was Jesus a political revolutionary?
- Was he the Messiah, the Son of God?
- What did Jesus teach about the end of the world?
- Did Jesus establish a community of disciples—the Church—to continue his work?
- How did Jesus interpret his death?
- What does the evidence tell us about Jesus' ultimate fate? Did he really rise from the dead?
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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Pope Benedict XVI, the 265th bishop of Rome, is the spiritual leader of over one billion Catholics. He is a highly-regarded theologian and the author of dozens of books.

He was born Joseph Ratzinger, at Marktl am Inn, Diocese of Passau, Germany, on Holy Saturday, April 16, 1927. He was baptized the same day.

He spent his childhood and adolescence in Traunstein, a small village near the Austrian border, 30 kilometers (less than 20 miles) from Salzburg. In this environment, which he himself has defined as “Mozartian,” he received his Christian, cultural, and human formation.

He was ordained to the priesthood on June 29, 1951, and earned a doctorate in theology in 1953. Father Ratzinger qualified for university teaching in 1957 and held positions at a number of colleges and universities – ultimately serving in 1969 as chair of dogmatics and history of dogma at the University of Regensburg, where he also was university vice-president.

During the Second Vatican Council Father Ratzinger served as theological advisor to Cardinal Joseph Frings, Archbishop of Cologne.

Pope Paul VI named him Archbishop of Munich and Freising on March 25, 1977. He received episcopal ordination on May 28, 1977. Archbishop Ratzinger was the first diocesan priest for 80 years to take on the pastoral governance of the great Bavarian Archdiocese.

Less than a month later, Pope Paul VI made him a Cardinal.

The Venerable Pope John Paul II named him Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and President of the Pontifical Biblical Commission and of the International Theological Commission on Nov. 25, 1981.

He was President of the Preparatory Commission for the Catechism of the Catholic Church, which, after six years of work (1986-1992), presented the new Catechism to the Holy Father.

On Nov. 6, 1998, the Holy Father approved the election of Cardinal Ratzinger as Vice-Dean of the College of Cardinals. On Nov. 30, 2002, John Paul II approved Cardinal Ratzinger’s election as Dean; together with this office he was entrusted with the Suburbicarian See of Ostia.

As Dean of the College of Cardinals, he presided over John Paul II’s funeral ceremonies in 2005, and convened the conclave to elect his successor 10 days later. The College of Cardinals elected Cardinal Ratzinger the 265th Pope of the Roman Catholic Church on April 19, 2005.

Pope Benedict XVI is a prolific writer. *Introduction to Christianity* appeared in 1968. Since then, dozens of his works have been published – including *The Ratzinger Report* (1985), *Called to Communion: Understanding the Church Today* (1996), *Truth and Tolerance: Christian Belief and World Religions* (2004) and *Jesus of Nazareth: From the Baptism in the Jordan to the Transfiguration* (2007).

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ABOUT THE PUBLISHER

Ignatius Press is among the largest U.S. publishers and distributors of Catholic books, magazines, videos, DVDs, and music. It is the primary English-language publisher of Pope Benedict XVI's books.

Ignatius Press publishes a wide-range of works, including popular, best-selling titles; major spiritual and theological works; works of philosophy and Christian literature; and English translations of contemporary European theologians. It also publishes the magazines "Catholic World Report" and "Homiletic and Pastoral Review."

Ignatius Press best-selling titles include *Jesus of Nazareth: From the Baptism in the Jordan to the Transfiguration* by Pope Benedict XVI; *Light of the World*, the book-length interview of Pope Benedict XVI by Peter Sweewald; *Un-Planned* by Abby Johnson; *Be A Man!* by Fr. Larry Richards; *The Ignatius Catholic Study Bible – New Testament* by Scott Hahn and Curtis Mitch; *Rome Sweet Home* by Scott Hahn; *The Everlasting Man* by G.K. Chesterton; *The Loser Letters* by Mary Eberstadt; *Father Elijah: An Apocalypse* by Michael O'Brien; *An Exorcist Tells His Story* by Fr. Gabriele Amorth; and *7 Secrets of the Eucharist* by Vinny Flynn.

Jesuit Father Joseph Fessio founded Ignatius Press in 1978. A former pupil of Pope Benedict XVI, Father Fessio says the objective of Ignatius Press is "to support the teachings of the Church."

Ignatius Press is named for St. Ignatius of Loyola, founder of the Jesuit Order. The Catholic publishing house is based in San Francisco, Calif.

For more information, visit the Ignatius Press website at www.ignatius.com

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“This theological masterpiece courageously confronts head-on two centuries of historical exegesis and establishes a fresh way of reading the Gospels as both biography and theology in a coherent way. The author explains, ‘I set out to discover the real Jesus, on the basis of whom something like a Christology from below would then become possible. The quest for the historical Jesus, as conducted in mainstream critical exegesis in accordance with its hermeneutical presuppositions, lacks sufficient content to exert any significant historical impact. It is focused too much on the past for it to make possible a personal relationship with Jesus.’

“Here we find a compelling model for the presentation of the life of holy rabbi, Hillel or Aqiba, in the same context as we account for the life of Jesus.”

– Jacob Neusner
Distinguished Service Professor of the History and Theology of Judaism
Senior Fellow, Institute of Advanced Theology
Bard College
Annandale-on-Hudson, N.Y.

“On the Day of Pentecost, Peter sought to explain to the assembled multitude what God had done through Jesus of Nazareth, crucified and risen. Peter’s successor, Benedict XVI, here undertakes the same urgent task, in fruitful dialogue with the historical-critical biblical scholarship that dominates contemporary academic study of Jesus. Charting the path of the new evangelization, Pope Benedict XVI uncovers for us the living source of Peter’s evangelizing mission: Jesus, in whom God gives hope to the world.”

– Matthew Levering, Ph.D.
Co-Editor, *Nova et Vetera*, and Co-Director, Center for Catholic-Evangelical Dialogue

“The ‘Jesus of Nazareth’ project will be Pope Benedict’s great legacy, just as the ‘Theology of the Body’ has become the Venerable Pope John Paul’s. In this second volume he accomplishes many remarkable things, among them a positive and substantive contribution to the centuries-long Christian dialogue about expiation and atonement. This will be of great value to those who want to understand -- and share with others -- how our salvation is accomplished by Jesus’ passion, death and resurrection. In particular, Benedict shows how the institution of the Eucharist on Holy Thursday is what transformed Jesus’ death on Good Friday from being a Roman execution into the supreme sacrifice of God’s redemptive love. Benedict’s writing is a feast for the soul that deserves to be read and savored.”

– Scott Hahn, Ph.D.
Founder and Director of the St. Paul Center for Biblical Theology

“Working from Scripture, the Church Fathers and contemporary scholarship, Benedict XVI deftly brings together the historical and theological dimensions of the gospel portraits of Jesus. This is a splendid, penetrating study of the central figure of Christian faith; a learned and spiritual illumination not only of who Jesus was, but who he is for us today.”

– +Charles J. Chaput, O.F.M. Cap.
Archbishop of Denver

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“What better guide could you find than Benedict XVI to lead you on the bracing adventure of exploring the historical Jesus and discovering, under the tutelage of this most sage successor to Peter, the inner meaning of Jesus’ death and resurrection. Faith and reason are the two wings Benedict XVI takes up to lead us to astonishingly fresh spiritual perspectives and dizzying heights. This book often takes one’s breath away, while infusing in the reader the God-breathed Word, which is the Gospel.”

– Tim Gray, Ph.D.
President
Augustine Institute
Denver, Colorado

“As is his first volume, so, once again, in his second volume Pope Benedict XVI has authored a marvelous book, this time on the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus. What makes this study so attractive is the depth of its biblical insight, its attention to historical issues, its keen theological acumen, and its lucid and precise expression. Moreover, as with the first volume, it is written in a serene and prayerful manner – a serenity and a prayerfulness that is conveyed to the heart and mind of the reader. This book fulfills Pope Benedict’s ardent desire – that it would ‘be helpful to all readers who seek to encounter Jesus and to believe in him.’”

– Thomas G. Weinandy, O.F.M., Cap.
Executive Director for the Secretariat for Doctrine
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

“In this masterful interweaving of history and theology, Pope Benedict takes us to the heart of the Holy Week story. He reveals how the truth about Jesus is best grasped, not by minimalist scholarly reconstructions, but by profound meditation upon the Christ of the Gospels. A whole Lenten retreat in one volume.”

– Ian Boxall
St Stephen’s House, Oxford

“This second volume of Pope Benedict’s ‘search for the face of the Lord’ draws us ever deeper into the mysteries of Jesus’ mission and life. At its heart glows a powerful meditation on the prayer of Jesus that draws into the mission of Christ the Saviour, and yet also toward the Saviour who lives among us still.”

– Lewis Ayres
Bede Professor of Catholic Theology at Durham University

“Benedict XVI writes with the deft touch of a mature scholar and an experienced teacher. He explains his often brilliant insights with simple clarity and the masterly phrase which enlightens and convinces. His purpose is to give a reading which leads to a personal encounter with Christ. It is not just a historical study, but builds on the historico-critical method to arrive at a ‘faith-hermeneutic’. It does, of course, discuss historical problems, but the Pope’s primary aim is ‘listening with Jesus’ disciples across the ages’. It is a reading of the Gospel not by a historian but by a historically alert theologian, writing from within the Church.”

– Dom Henry Wansbrough, O.S.B.
Appleforth Abbey

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Jesus of Nazareth: From the Baptism in the Jordan to the Transfiguration is the first book Pope Benedict XVI wrote after his election as the 265th Pope of the Roman Catholic Church. Doubleday published the hardcover version of the book in 2007. Ignatius Press published the paperback edition, which includes an index, in 2008.

In the book's introduction, Benedict states explicitly that the treatise is in "no way an exercise of the magisterium," but rather an "expression of his personal search for the face of the Lord." Throughout 10 chapters, Benedict XVI covers the bulk of Jesus' public ministry, encompassing subjects and events that include Christ's baptism at the hands of John the Baptist; the Sermon on the Mount; the meaning of the parables; the Calling of the Twelve; the Confession of Peter; and the Transfiguration.

Benedict seeks to salvage the person of Jesus from recent "popular" depictions and to restore Jesus' true identity as discovered in the Gospels. Through his brilliance as a theologian and his personal conviction as a believer, the Pope shares a rich, compelling, flesh-and-blood portrait of Jesus during the time of his ministry and invites readers to encounter, face-to-face, the central figure of the Christian faith.

In doing this, Benedict explores the meaning of key moments in the Gospels (the temptations of Jesus, the Transfiguration and the Sermon on the Mount) and points to passages in which Jesus outlines Pauline theology. He underscores Jesus' being rooted in the Old Testament – showing, for example, that the Beatitudes participate in a long tradition of blessings, as exemplified in Psalms and Jeremiah.

Benedict XVI draws on historical-critical scholarship of the New Testament, but cautions readers that the usefulness of strictly historical readings of Scripture is limited. He asserts that one also must read Scripture theologically and view each passage of the Bible as part of a larger canonical whole.

Among those offering insightful reviews of *Jesus of Nazareth: From the Baptism in the Jordan to the Transfiguration* is noted author and theologian George Weigel, who said of the pope and the book: "Joseph Ratzinger was a world-class theologian long before he became the Roman Curia's official defender of Catholic doctrine, and then the pope. In *Jesus of Nazareth I*, Ratzinger reveals the core of his personality as he invites his readers into the classroom of a master teacher—one who has absorbed the best that modern biblical scholarship has to offer and has yet emerged from that encounter with his faith intact and enriched."

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Benedict XVI, the 265th Pope of the Roman Catholic Church

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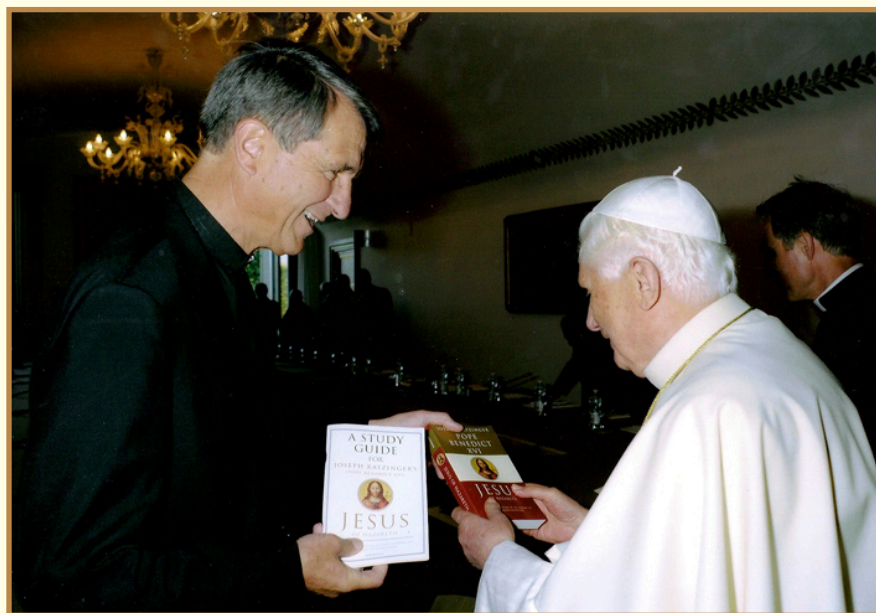
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Ignatius Press Publisher and Founder Fr. Joseph Fessio presents the Holy Father with a copy of *Jesus of Nazareth: From the Baptism in the Jordan to the Transfiguration* upon publication of that volume in 2007.

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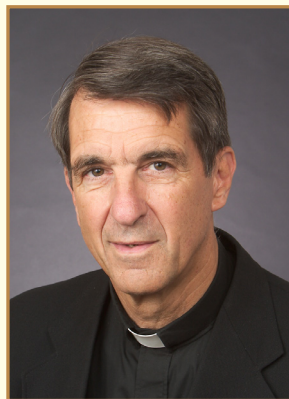
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Fr. Joseph Fessio, S.J.

Father Joseph Fessio, S.J., is the founder and publisher of Ignatius Press. He also founded the St. Ignatius Institute of the University of San Francisco and Campion College.

He holds an undergraduate degree in civil engineering from the University of Santa Clara, and B.A. and M.A. degrees in Philosophy from Gonzaga University.

Fr. Fessio was ordained as a Roman Catholic priest in 1972, after earning an M.A. in Theology from the Fourvière Jesuit Faculty of Theology in Lyons, France. He earned a doctorate in Theology from the University of Regensburg, West Germany, in 1975. His dissertation director was then-Professor Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, now Pope Benedict XVI.

He has taught Philosophy at Gonzaga University and the University of Santa Clara, and Theology at the University of San Francisco and Ave Maria University.

Fr. Fessio founded Ignatius Press in 1978.



Mark Brumley

Mark Brumley is President and Chief Executive Officer for Ignatius Press.

He is editor and coauthor of *A Study Guide to Joseph Ratzinger's/Pope Benedict XVI's Jesus of Nazareth* and *A Study Guide to Joseph Ratzinger's/Pope Benedict XVI's Jesus of Nazareth: Holy Week*. He is also a producer and co-writer of the documentary "Did Jesus Really Rise from the Dead?" and executive producer of the documentaries "The Da Vinci Hoax," "The Story of the Nativity," and "Lost Gospels or False Gospels?"

Brumley writes and speaks widely on theological subjects and religious controversies. He has appeared on Fox News Channel, ABC News, MSNBC, CNN, the BBC, EWTN, Relevant Radio, and Ave Maria Radio. He also is a regular guest on the popular radio show "Catholic Answers Live."

Brumley also is project coordinator for the Ignatius Catholic Study Bible, and is editor of Ignatius Press' Modern Apologetics Library. He is also the author of *How Not To Share Your Faith* (Catholic Answers) and a contributor to *The Five Issues That Matter Most*.

Brumley is a trustee of the Dominican School of Philosophy and Theology in Berkeley, Calif., and an adjunct professor of theology for the Institute for Pastoral Theology of Ave Maria University. Among other subjects, he has taught apologetics, social ethics, the documents of Vatican II, and the teachings of Pope John Paul II. He lives in Napa, Calif., and is a member of the Napa chapter of Legatus. In 2005, he received the Pro Ecclesia Award from the Vatican.

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Can you talk about how the idea to write this book came about?

The responsibility for Jesus' death can be a volatile subject. In the past, some Christians have assigned collective responsibility to the Jewish people for the death of Jesus. Often these Christians have claimed biblical support for their actions. How should we understand the Gospel writers' treatment of the subject of responsibility for Jesus' death?

Is the Pope saying that the Old Covenant has expired because of Jesus ... replaced by his New Covenant?

Benedict XVI writes about the need for a correct understanding of Israel's continuing mission. And yet he makes it clear that Jesus was and is the Jewish Messiah, the one who fulfills the Old Testament promises. Quoting St. Paul, the Holy Father also insists that in the end "all Israel will be saved". Is there a way Christians can present Jesus as the Messiah who speaks to Jews and Gentiles alike, even during this "time of the nations"?

Do any of the Pope's conclusions in the book surprise you? If so, what ... and why?

Does the Pope say with certainty that the Resurrection actually happened?

How does this book complement the Pope's first volume on Jesus' life, and vice versa?

Many books have been written about Jesus of Nazareth. Some are works of scholarship. Some are works of piety. Some attempt to reconstruct his life and ministry as a single narrative. What is new or different about what the Holy Father has done in this book?

Do we really need historical scholarship in order for us to know Jesus?

If scholarship can tell us about Jesus, wouldn't it be the most reliable, "scientific" way to know the "real Jesus"?

Where does this book belong among the collective works that have been written about Jesus?

The abuse of religion for political ends is a theme the Pope addresses several times in *Jesus of Nazareth: Holy Week*. He insists that Jesus was not a political revolutionary, and that his was not a mission to establish a political kingdom. Does Jesus' message have any political relevance?

If non-Christians or non-believers read this book, what do you believe they'll learn about Jesus?

What will they learn about the Church?

Why do you believe it was so important to Pope Benedict that he write his two works on Jesus' life?

What will we learn about the Holy Father by reading this book?

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CONTACT

The Maximus Group
www.MaximusMG.com

Christine Schicker
404-610-8871 (cell)
678-990-9032 (office)
CSchicker@MaximusMG.com

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IMAGES

SPOKESPERSON BIOS

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

CONTACT