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WOMEN RELIGIOUS RESPOND TO NEWS OF POPE'S RESIGNATION

[The Catholic Telegraph](#) / [February 11, 2013](#) / [337](#)

By Eileen Connelly, OSU • The Catholic Telegraph

Like many Catholics around the world, the Sisters of the Precious Blood were surprised by today's announcement that Pope Benedict XVI will be retiring at the end of February. Still, the congregation understands the pope's decision.

"The pressures and energy required of an office of such immense responsibility are more than we have a right to expect of a man in his mid-eighties," said Sister Joyce Lehman, president of the Sisters of the Precious Blood, based in Dayton, Ohio. "Pope Benedict's action demonstrates the wisdom and humility of someone who loves the church and the people of God more than the trappings of power, and who is not afraid to break with six centuries of practice to put the good the church ahead of any personal desire for control. We ask God to watch over him as he spends the rest of this month preparing the office for his successor as well as offering ongoing prayers for his time after he leaves."

The Sisters of Mercy of the Americas, which includes Sisters in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati expressed their thanks and support for the pontiff in a statement that reads: "The Sisters of Mercy of the Americas extend our gratitude to Pope Benedict XVI for his faithfulness and years of dedicated service to the People of God. We honor and respect his decision today and offer our prayer for his health and



peace as he prepares to leave the papacy. We stand in prayer with the whole church as we anticipate the selection of the next pope.

In addition, the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR), of which many local religious communities are members, issued a statement, which "thanks Pope Benedict XVI for his many years of tireless service to the Catholic Church and for the contributions he has made as a theologian, as the head of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and as pope. We respect his integrity in making what must have been a difficult decision to resign and promise him our prayer as he prepares to leave the papacy. May he be richly blessed for his profound dedication to the service of the Gospel."