

Notes and Comments

TELEGRAM FROM POPE JOHN PAUL II

To my revered Brother, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith:

It is my particular desire, after manifesting my sincere sympathy at the sudden death of the esteemed Professor Hans Urs von Balthasar, to show the deceased, on the occasion of his burial services, a final honor through a personal word of commemoration.

All who knew the priest, von Balthasar, are shocked, and grieve over the loss of a great son of the Church, an outstanding man of theology and of the arts, who deserves a special place of honor in contemporary ecclesiastical and cultural life.

It was my wish to acknowledge and to honor in a solemn fashion the

merits he earned through his long and tireless labors as a spiritual teacher and as an esteemed scholar by naming him to the dignity of the Cardinalate in the last Consistory. We submit in humility to the judgment of God who now has called this faithful servant of the Church so unexpectedly into eternity.

Your participation at the solemn funeral services, very reverend Cardinal, will be an expression of the high esteem in which the person and the life-work of this great priest and theologian are held by the Holy See. With all who commemorate him in sorrow and in gratitude, I beg for the dear departed eternal fulfillment in God's light and glory. Now that his earthly life is completed, may he, who was for many a spiritual leader on the way to faith, be granted the vision of God, face to face.

In spiritual union, I impart to all who participate by their prayers in this liturgy for the deceased, from my heart, my special apostolic blessing.

At the Vatican, 30 June 1988

John Paul II

*Translated by Josephine Koepfel,
O.C.D.*