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**Statement from the Primate on the resignation of Pope Benedict XVI**

I admire Pope Benedict's courage and grace in stepping down, recognizing his increasingly diminished stamina to carry out his ministry as bishop of Rome and head of the Roman Catholic Communion throughout the world.

The Pope has said that his decision comes after a repeated examination of conscience before God.

I believe his decision is the mark of a true pastor, of one who so loves the church that when he recognizes his incapacity to lead with the strength he once had, is prepared to step aside and make way for new leadership.

I ask for prayers for the Holy Father and for all who tend to him daily. I ask your prayers for all our brothers and sisters in the Roman Catholic Church as they await the announcement of a holy conclave to elect a new Pope.

As we reflect on Benedict's ministry, we give thanks for the cordial relationships he and former Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams enjoyed. Their abiding friendship in Christ was an inspiration to the continuing work of ecumenical dialogue (Anglican Roman Catholic International Commission) and the deep desire of our churches to grow together in faith and unity in the service of the Gospel.

It is at moments like this that we realize how very connected we all are in the body of Christ as holy wisdom marks the Pope's decision to step down. May such wisdom mark the manner in which we make decisions in the ministries entrusted to us that by them the church will be well served now and for years to come.

The Most Reverend Fred Hiltz  
Primate of the Anglican Church of Canada