



Rastislav

Arcibiskup prešovský, metropolita českých krajín a Slovenska

РАСТИСЛАВЪ

Архиепископ прѣшевскій, митрополитъ чешскыхъ земель и Словачиѣи

Rastislav

Archbishop of Prešov, Metropolitan of the Czech Lands and Slovakia

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**TO HIS HOLINESS
FRANCIS,
POPE OF ROME**

Your Holiness,

It was with sadness that I received the news today of the death of retired Pope Benedict XVI.

The reposed Pontiff was a man of the Church from his youngest days. He was an intellectual, a most authoritative bishop and above all a profound man of prayer, all of which allowed him to serve God, who alone was the meaning of his long life.

I would especially like to note the sensitivity and interest, which the Pontiff showed towards Orthodoxy. His natural tact and his genuinely profound knowledge served the cause of strengthening inter-confessional dialogue and were the pledge of its mutual benefit.

We shall retain warm prayerful memories of His Holiness, believing that the All-Merciful Lord, who «is not the God of the dead, but of the living», shall rest him in the mansions of the righteous.

With love in the Lord

+ Rastislav