

Why I Am Catholic

The Pope.

This week Pope Benedict XVI makes his first visit to the United States. This is the first visit of a Pope since Pope John Paul II's last visit in 1999 to St. Louis, Mo.

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* states that: "The Pope, Bishop of Rome and Peter's successor, 'is the perpetual and visible source and foundation of the unity both of the bishops and of the whole company of the faithful.' 'For the Roman Pontiff, by reason of his office as Vicar of Christ, and as pastor of the entire Church has full, supreme, and universal power over the whole Church, a power which he can always exercise unhindered.'" (882)

It further reminds us that: "The Lord made Simon alone, whom he named Peter, the "rock" of his Church. He gave him the keys of his Church and instituted him shepherd of the whole flock." (881)

Pope Benedict XVI is the 265th Pope. The word "Pope" comes from the Latin *papa*. "Marcellinus (d. 304) is the first Bishop of Rome whom sources show used the title of pope. In the 11th century, after the East-West Schism (1054), Gregory VII declared the term "Pope" to be reserved for the Bishop of Rome." (*Wikipedia*)