



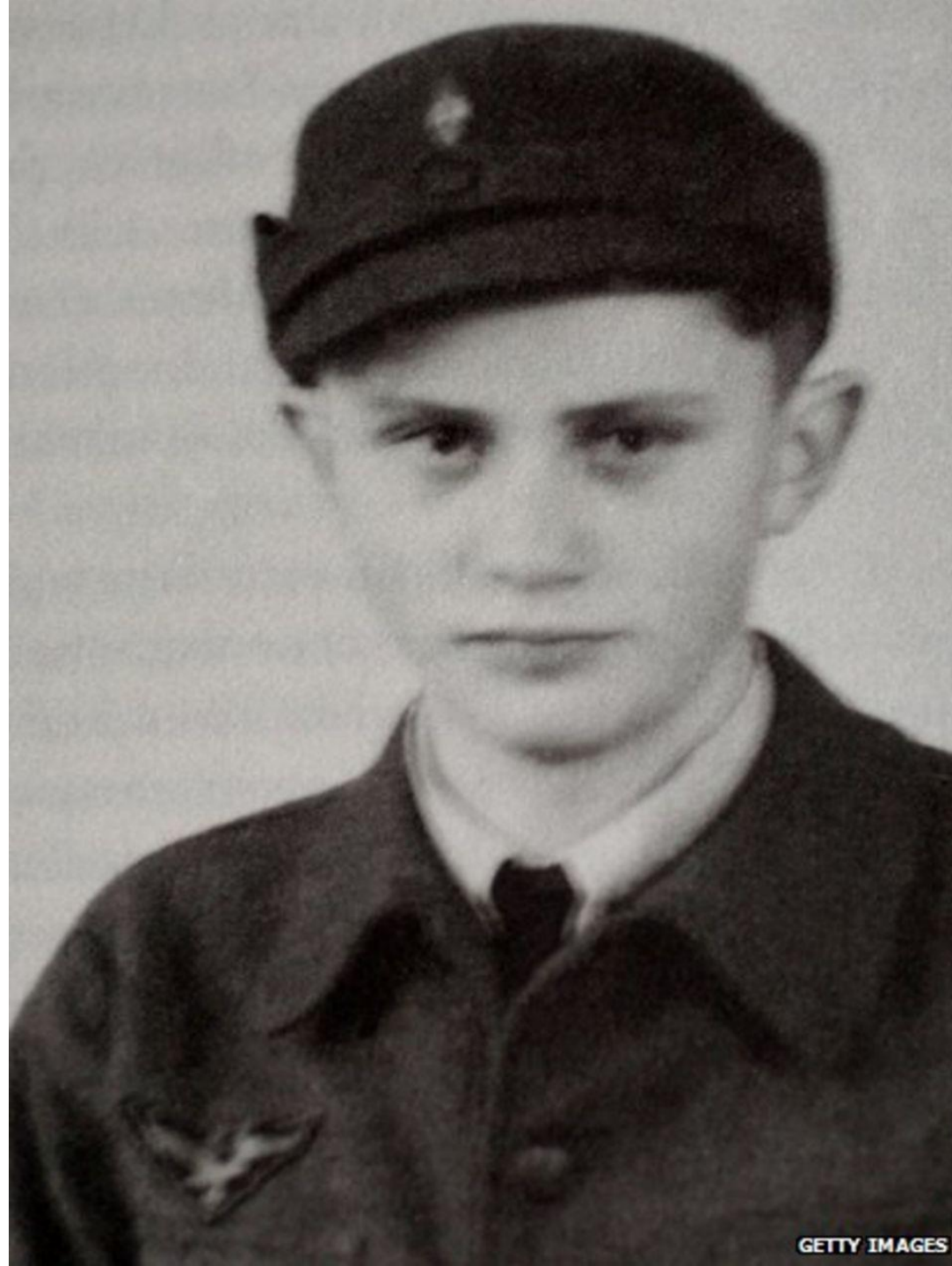
Pope Benedict XVI





Last week, 31st December we heard the news that Pope Benedict XVI had died aged 95. So what do we know about him? Today he will have his funeral which is called a Requiem Mass in the Catholic Church.

Pope Benedict XVI was born Joseph Ratzinger in Germany in 1927. He joined the army when he was only 14 and served in WW2



From 1946 to 1951 he studied philosophy and theology at Munich University in Germany. In June 1951 he became a priest.





In 1977, Pope Paul VI appointed him Archbishop of Munich - and then cardinal.



He became Pope Benedict XVI on 19 April 2005, when he was 78. Here he is waving to the crowds in Vatican City, Rome.



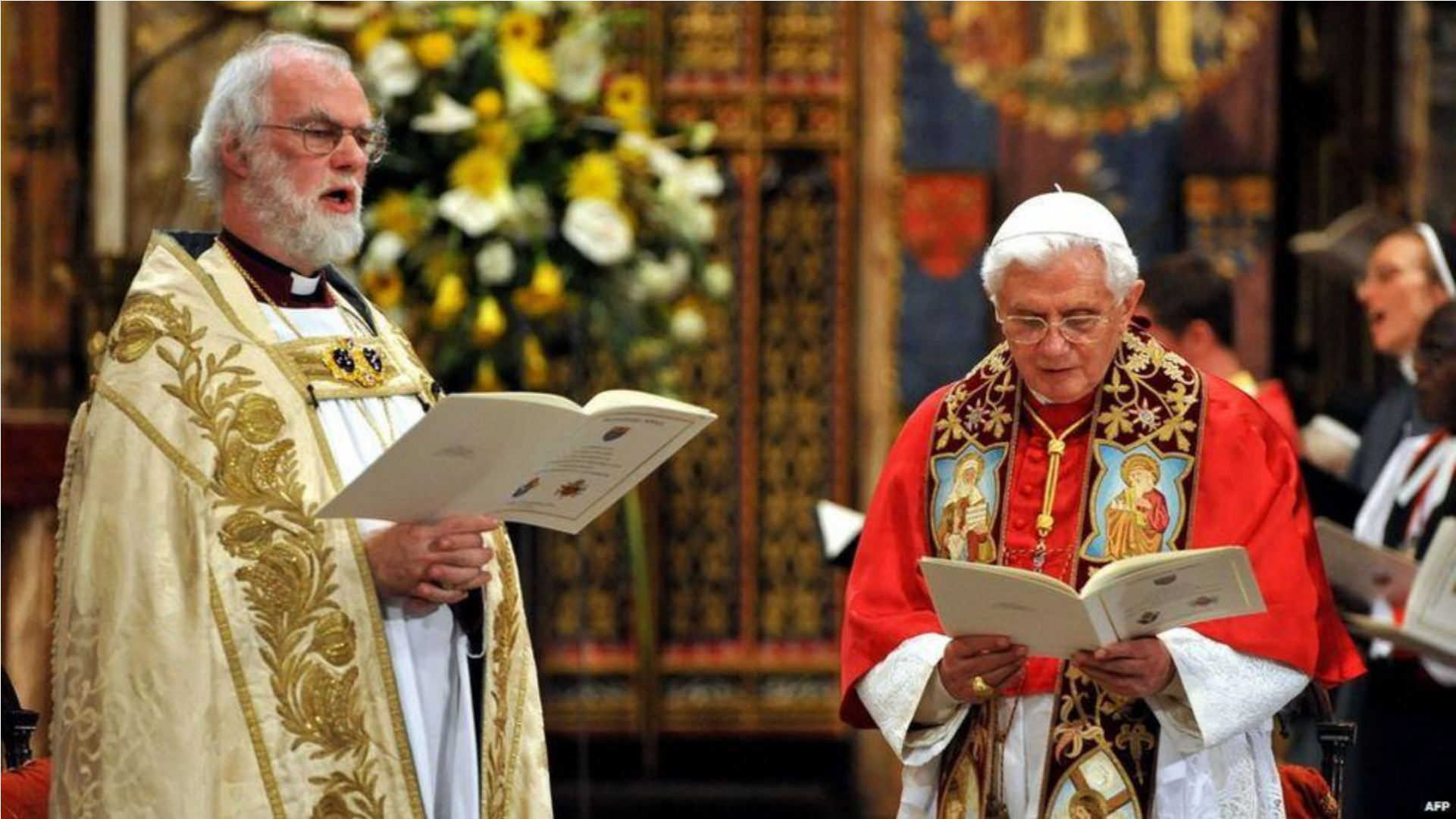
Pope Benedict XVI is the first pope to join Twitter. He sent his first tweets in 2012.



His tweet read: "Dear friends, I am pleased to get in touch with you through Twitter. Thank you for your generous response. I bless all of you from my heart."

The Pope gained nearly one million followers even before his first tweet!

The Pope's Twitter name, Pontifex, means "pontiff" or "builder of bridges".



In 2010, Pope Benedict became the first pope to visit the UK in more than 25 years. Here he is visiting Westminster Abbey in central London.

Pope Benedict XVI announced his resignation in Latin during a meeting of Vatican cardinals. It is only the fourth time in history that a pope has stepped down. It last happened in 1415.



In a statement he said: "I have come to the certainty that my strengths, due to an advanced age, are no longer suited to an adequate exercise of the Petrine ministry."



This morning he will have his funeral which is called a Requiem Mass in the Catholic Church. Pope Francis will say the Mass in St Peter's Square.

Prayer for Benedict XVI

*O' God,
grant that your departed servant Pope Benedict,
whom you made successor of Peter
and shepherd of your Church,
may happily enjoy for ever in your presence in heaven
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the
Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever.*

Amen.

*Eternal rest, grant unto him O Lord,
and let perpetual light shine upon him.
May he rest in peace.
Amen.*

