



Subdued Fires

An Intimate Portrait of Pope Benedict XVI

Gary O'Connor

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The life story of one of the most important figures on earth

Omaha Beach, June 6, 2004. A delegation sent by John Paul II from the Vatican to commemorate the 60th anniversary of D-Day is headed by Joseph Ratzinger, a former Nazi youth who, while resident in Rome for the previous 23 years, is known as 'The Panzer Cardinal'. Ratzinger insisted on being at the commemoration.

Garry O'Connor's biography begins here. And what is revealed from that point is an extraordinary figure, a man who a year later would be Pope, something no one predicted, at the age of 78. How did 12 years of Nazi rule affect the young Ratzinger? Did it inform his stand on religious persecution; famine and poverty; war and its consequences; climate change; stem-cell research and biological engineering; marriage and the family; abuse by priests; abortion, contraception, women priests, homosexuality, declining ordinations and Church attendance in Western Europe? And is it relevant to his astonishing resignation in February 2013? Who is this man? Is he 'the Panzer Cardinal', 'God's Rottweiler', as he has been called, enforcer of Church discipline worldwide - or is he a true visionary who has confronted the crisis of faith with wisdom and fortitude? And why did he step down?

- Examining, in-depth this remarkable man, revealing the religious drama of his life and times.
- Tackling the important social and ethical issues on which Joseph Ratzinger, before and after becoming Pope, has taken a stand.
- Determining if Ratzinger has indeed changed from the earlier expectations people had of him.
- Progressively charting Ratzinger's life as he reveals more of himself up until the point he is finally in the office of Pontiff.
- Asks if after nearly eight years in the highest office, the Pope has showed himself to be a visionary.
- Questions whether he is in fact the shadowy, sinister figure of media sound bites and headlines or if this is just a way of waging an increasingly hostile war against Christianity – and in particular the Catholic Church.

Theatre director and novelist **Gary O'Connor** is the author of more than a dozen books including best-selling biographies of Ralph Richardson, Alec Guinness, William Shakespeare and Pope John Paul II, and several plays. For The History Press he has written the forthcoming 1st Household Cavalry 1943-44 and The Butch of Poland: Hans Frank.

Requests for review copies, images and interviews contact **Kerry Green** at 01453 732512 email: kgreen@thehistorypress.co.uk
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