

Benedict XVI removes name from controversial new book

by [Claire Giangravé](#) in the [February 12, 2020](#) issue



(Associated Press)

On January 14, Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI asked not to be mentioned as coauthor of a book scheduled for release in February, according to a close aide. Excerpts from the book appeared to place the ex-pope at odds with Pope Francis on rules over priestly celibacy.

The book in question, *From the Depths of Our Hearts: Priesthood, Celibacy, and the Crisis of the Catholic Church*, was publicized as being coauthored by Benedict with Cardinal Robert Sarah, who heads the Vatican office for liturgy.

The book's publishing house in the United States, Ignatius Press, released a statement saying it had received the text from the French publisher Fayard, which

stated that Benedict XVI wrote the introduction, conclusion, and an entire chapter on celibacy.

“Given that, according to Benedict XVI’s correspondence and Cardinal Sarah’s statement, the two men collaborated on this book for several months, that none of the essays have appeared elsewhere, and that a joint work as defined by the Chicago Manual of Style is ‘a work prepared by two or more authors with the intention that their contribution be merged into inseparable or interdependent parts of a unitary whole,’ Ignatius Press considers this a coauthored publication,” the statement read.

In the introduction, signed by Benedict and published by the French daily *Le Figaro*, the authors speak in favor of celibacy for priests, stating that marriage and the priesthood require such an absolute dedication that “it doesn’t seem possible to realize both vocations simultaneously.”

These remarks came at a time when Pope Francis is considering allowing certain married men, called *viri probati*, to become priests in remote areas where clergy are scarce.

Sources claiming to be close to the emeritus pope told local papers that Benedict never gave permission for his signature and image to be used for the publication of any book. Cardinal Sarah released a timeline of his communications with Benedict and pictures showing his correspondence with Benedict on Twitter.

While confusion over the authorship of the book remains and is likely to escalate in February when the book is scheduled for release in the United States, the misunderstanding, which is already being dubbed as “bookgate” in some Catholic circles, has put a spotlight on the real or perceived rift between the two popes. —Religion News Service