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## Munich report on abuse. Experts: "Benedict XVI did not lie or perjure himself"

Advisers of Benedict XVI - Stefan Mückl, Helmuth Pree, Stefan Korta, Carsten Brennecke - lawyers and legal experts who assisted him in the drafting of the statement in response to the report on sexual abuse in the diocese of Munich and Freising, released on 20 January last, which cites the Pope emeritus, archbishop of Munich from 1977 to 1982, and considers his years as prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, concluded that "Benedict XVI did not lie or knowingly make false statements." The report on sexual abuse in the diocese of Munich and Freising states that contrary to his statement in response to the experts, Joseph Ratzinger was present at the meeting of the Ordinariate on January 15, 1980, when Priest X was discussed. Furthermore, it claims that Cardinal Ratzinger allegedly employed this priest in pastoral activity even though he was aware of the abuses committed by him, and thereby allegedly covered up his sexual abuses. *According to the experts serving as legal advisers for Benedict XVI, "this does not correspond to the truth." In fact, according to their verifications Joseph Ratzinger "was neither aware that Priest X was an abuser, nor that he was included in pastoral activity."* The records show that at the meeting of the Ordinariate on January 15, 1980, "it was not decided to engage Priest X in pastoral activity and that the meeting in question did not discuss the fact that the priest had committed sexual abuse. It was exclusively a question of the accommodation of the young Priest X in Munich because he had to undergo therapy there. This request was complied with. During the meeting the reason for the therapy was not mentioned. It was therefore not decided at the meeting to engage the abuser in pastoral work." *"The affirmation contained in Benedict XVI's memoir that he did not take part in the meeting of the Ordinariate on January 15, 1980 is indeed incorrect", write the experts. They point out that Benedict XVI "did not lie or knowingly make a false statement":* the experts serving as legal advisers to the Pope emeritus state that they "relied on the false indication erroneously inserted by failing to expressly ask Benedict XVI if he had been present at that meeting. On the basis of the erroneous transcription of the minutes, it was assumed instead that Joseph Ratzinger had not been present. Benedict XVI, due to the great haste with which he had to verify his memoir in a few days, given the time limits imposed by the experts, did not notice the error, but trusted the alleged transcription of his absence.

**One cannot impute this transcription error to Benedict XVI as a conscious false statement or 'lie.'"**

The presence of Joseph Ratzinger was therefore evident. Moreover, in 2010 several press articles report - without later denial - the presence of Cardinal Ratzinger at the meeting. Similarly, a biography of Benedict XVI published in 2020 states: "As a bishop, during a meeting of the Ordinariate in 1980, he had only agreed that the priest in question could come to Munich to undergo psychotherapy" (Peter Seewald, Benedikt XVI., Droemer Verlag 2020, p. 938). The report equally charges Benedict XVI with "misbehaviour in three other cases." The legal experts refute this too, pointing out that

**"in none of the cases analyzed by the expert report was Joseph Ratzinger aware of sexual abuse committed or suspicion of sexual abuse committed by priests."**

The expert report provides no evidence for an allegation of misconduct or conspiracy in any cover up. As an archbishop, Cardinal Ratzinger was not involved in any cover-up of acts of abuse.

