



2026 RATZINGER PRIZE:

Prof. John C. Cavadini (University of Notre Dame, IN)

- The Prize will be awarded by the **Holy Father Leo XIV** on **19 December** at the Vatican Apostolic Palace.
- The Prize is awarded to **scholars** who have distinguished themselves through outstanding achievements in publication and scientific research.
- Nominations for the Prize are submitted to the Holy Father, for his approval, by the Foundation's Scientific Committee.
- John C. Cavadini is a professor of Theology at the University of Notre Dame, specialising in Patristic Theology, with a particular focus on the **theology of St Augustine**.

Vatican City, 22 September 2026 – The **Ratzinger Prize** returns to the United States. The winner of the 2026 edition, selected by the Scientific Committee of the **Vatican Foundation Joseph Ratzinger – Benedict XVI** and approved by **Pope Leo XIV**, is **John C. Cavadini**, Professor of Theology at the **University of Notre Dame (Indiana)**, where he also served as Director of the McGrath Institute for Church Life. Cavadini teaches, conducts research and publishes in the field of patristic theology, with a particular focus on the theology of St Augustine. The Prize will be presented by the **Holy Father on 19 December 2026 at the Vatican Apostolic Palace**.

Commenting on the award, the **President of the Vatican Foundation Joseph Ratzinger – Benedict XVI**, Prof. **Roberto Regoli**, stated: «Prof. Cavadini is highly regarded for the rigour of his theological publications, his commitment and zeal in university teaching, his academic expertise, his pastoral passion and his lifelong service to the Church».

Professor **Cavadini** commented: «I have sought to live out my vocation as a theologian following the example of Origen of Alexandria, a third-century theologian, who repeatedly declared that, as a theologian, he wished to be a *vir ecclesiasticus*, a man of the Church. At Notre Dame, I have been able to live out my vocation as a man of the Church and, at the same time, as a man of academia. I am particularly grateful for this award because it recognises these two aspects of my vocation as a theologian».



The Award's statistics

The Prize has been awarded annually since 2011. By the 2026 edition, the **total number of laureates will reach 32**. They are primarily eminent figures in the fields of dogmatic or fundamental theology, Sacred Scripture, patrology, philosophy, law and sociology, or in the arts, music, architecture and sculpture.

The laureates come from no fewer than 18 different countries across five continents: Germany (7), France (4), Spain (3), Italy (3), the United States (2), Australia, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Canada, Estonia, Japan, Great Britain, Greece, Ireland, Lebanon, Poland, South Africa and Switzerland.

The award winners are not only Catholics, but also members of other Christian denominations – one Anglican, one Lutheran, two Orthodox – and one is Jewish.

Towards the centenary: three international conferences in November

There are numerous events planned in the run-up to the centenary of Ratzinger's birth, which began on 16 April. Three international initiatives are scheduled for November, in which the Foundation is directly involved:

- **From 2 to 4 November in the United States**, at Saint Mary's University of Minnesota, an international Symposium is taking place entitled: *Beauty will Save Us: Wonder and Hope in the Works of Joseph Ratzinger/Benedict XVI*.
- **From 4 to 6 November**, organised by the Diocese of Winona-Rochester in collaboration with the publishing group "Word on Fire", the annual The New Ressourcement conference will take place, entitled: *Joseph Ratzinger and his sources*.
- **From 18 to 21 November**, in Nairobi (Kenya), the Symposium *Constellations of Hope: Africa and the Renewal of the Church in the Vision of Benedict XVI* will take place in collaboration with Tangaza University and Saint Mary's University of Minnesota.

«The major international conferences of 2026 highlight Africa and the United States: two continents that can make an equally significant contribution to countering the distortions facing humanity today, as Pope Leo XIV reminds us, following in the footsteps of his predecessors», commented Prof. **Pierluca Azzaro**, executive secretary of the Vatican Foundation Joseph Ratzinger – Benedict XVI.

A fresh approach to communication

The Foundation is revamping its communication strategy with the aim of reaching an ever-wider and more diverse audience. With the help of the communications agency Catholikey, the Foundation's Newsletter has been launched, and the Foundation's [X](#) and [Instagram profiles](#), as well as its [YouTube channel](#), have been added to the existing [Facebook page](#).



For further information: www.fondazioneratzinger.va

Digital press kit: [Press Kit](#)

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