

# **Pope baptizes 16 infants, says sacraments help parents raise kids right**

VATICAN CITY – Pope Benedict XVI baptized 16 infants and told their parents and godparents that prayer and the sacraments will give them the strength and guidance they need to promote a child's true well-being.

Presiding over the annual liturgy in the Sistine Chapel Jan. 8, the feast of the Baptism of the Lord, the pope said the sacraments and putting one's trust in God through prayer offer "that light of truth" that illuminates the right path to take in their child's education and upbringing.

The Holy Spirit "enlightens the mind, warms the heart of the educator so that he will know how to pass on an awareness of Jesus and his love," he said in his homily.

Grounded in faith and in communion with God, parents and teachers will know how to be both "tender and strong, gentle and firm, be silent and speak at the right time, to scold and correct in the right way," he said.

The infants, 10 boys and six girls including a set of twins, were baptized by the pope over a font that was supported by an ornately detailed bronze olive tree. One by one the parents suspended their babies over the font as the pope poured water from a gilded shell.

The pope recalled St. John the Baptist's baptism of the Lord in his homily and said a true teacher, like the saint, leads people to the truth – to Christ – and does not try to establish loyalty to himself.

"Parents are not the source, like we priests are also not the source" of salvation and the truth, he said. The sacraments and the word of God are the source of salvation and "we are rather like channels through which the lifeblood of God's love must pass," he said.

“Parents must give a lot” when raising their children, so if parents don’t receive strength, support and knowledge from the true sources of salvation then they will be left empty and all dried up inside and no longer able to teach others, he said.

One of the intentions read during the prayers of the faithful was “for children who suffer from mistreatment, hunger and disease: May the Lord always call forth men and women able to kneel before them with tireless charity and tenacious hope.”

*Copyright © 2012 Catholic News Service/U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops*