

Benedict XVI delivers gifts to sick children on the occasion of Epiphany

[Vatican City](#) : [Vatican City](#) | Jan 05, 2011



Pope Benedict XVI visit the Gemelli hospital in Rome

[Pope Benedict XVI](#) gave presents to sick children treated in hospital Roman on Wednesday, the eve of Epiphany - when the little ones in Italy celebrates the arrival of the Befana, a kind of fairy, who puts candy in the stockings of those who behaved well.

Benedict XVI visited the Hospital "Agostino Gemelli" Catholic University of Sacred Heart, through the pediatric division and meeting with parents of premature babies in incubators, where their children receive care.

He also blessed the treatment center for children with malformation of the spine (spina bifida). The structure, established in 1989, restored and opened in November, follows 700 children in the

region of Rome, southern Italy, especially Sicily, and Sardinia, from birth to adulthood.

After meeting with hospital employees and volunteers, the pope delivered stuffed animals and books for about 50 young patients accompanied by their parents.

"I came to see you to imitate a bit the Magi" that Christ offered gold, frankincense and myrrh according to the Catholic religion and "I also brought gifts for you to feel, through this small gesture, the friendliness, closeness and affection pope, "he said on the eve of Epiphany.

"God became a child like you to say that he is always close to you and to tell each one of us that each child has his face," said Benedict, who also wanted to give young patients' strength to fight the disease ".

This was the second pope to visit a hospital for children: on September 30, 2005, just months after assuming the leadership of the Catholic Church, he went to the hospital, Roman, "Bambino Gesù".

John Paul II visited in 1992 the divisions of oncology and pediatric neurology of the Gemelli hospital, where he had been hospitalized nine times. In total, he spent 153 days and 152 nights in the hospital, which made him say humorous, "the Vatican's number one is the St. Peter's Square, Vatican number two is located in Castel Gandolfo (summer residence) and the Gemelli hospital became Vatican number three. "