

Beat: News

Pope Benedict XVI joins Twitter, responds to questions from followers

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USPA News - Pope Benedict XVI on Wednesday put his finger on an iPad tablet device to send his first personal tweets on the social networking website Twitter, blessing his online fans and answering several questions from three followers from three different continents. "Dear friends, I am pleased to get in touch with you through Twitter. Thank you for your generous response. I bless all of you from my heart," the 85-year-old pope wrote in his first tweet to more than 700,000 followers.

The total number of followers had grown to nearly 1.8 million by late Thursday. Images on Vatican television showed the pope sending the tweet from an iPad tablet, although he needed a little help from Archbishop Claudio Maria Celli after pressing the screen too hard. The papal tweet was transmitted in a total of eight languages, including English, Italian, Spanish, French, German, Portuguese, Polish and Arabic. Benedict XVI later responded to three questions which were submitted by Twitter followers in recent days. The first person asked the pope how people can better celebrate the Year of Faith in their daily lives, to which he answered: "By speaking with Jesus in prayer, listening to what he tells you in the Gospel and looking for him in those in need." Shortly afterwards a second question was added: "How can faith in Jesus be lived in a world without hope?" The pope responded: "We can be certain that a believer is never alone. God is the solid rock upon which we build our lives and his love is always faithful." The third follower asked for suggestions from the pope as to how people can be more prayerful when they are busy with the demands of work, families and the world. "Offer everything you do to the Lord, ask his help in all the circumstances of daily life and remember that he is always beside you," the pope replied.

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