



The Holy See

FEAST OF THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD

POPE FRANCIS

ANGELUS

*Saint Peter's Square
Sunday, 12 January 2020*

[Multimedia]

*Dear Brothers and Sisters,
Good Morning!*

Once again I have had the joy of baptizing some children on today's Feast of the Baptism of the Lord. There were 32 today. Let us pray for them and for their families.

This year's liturgy offers us the event of the Baptism of Jesus according to the Gospel of Matthew (cf. 3:13-17). The Evangelist describes the dialogue between Jesus who asks to be baptized and John the Baptist who wants to prevent him and observes: "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" (v. 14). This decision by Jesus surprises the Baptist: in fact the Messiah does not need to be purified; indeed he is the one who purifies. But God is Holy. His ways are not ours and Jesus is God's path, an unpredictable path. Let us remember that God is the God of surprises.

John had stated that there was an abyssal, unbridgeable difference between him and Jesus. I am not worthy to carry his sandals (cf. Mt 3:11), he had said. But the Son of God came precisely to fill this gap between man and God. If Jesus is completely on God's side, he is also completely on the side of mankind and he reunites what was divided. This is why he answers John: "Let it be so now; for thus it is fitting for us to fulfil all righteousness" (v. 15). The Messiah asks to be baptized so that all righteousness be fulfilled, that God's design which passes through filial obedience and solidarity with fragile and sinful mankind, be fulfilled. It is the path of humility and of God's

complete closeness to his children.

The prophet Isaiah also announces the righteousness of the Servant of God who fulfills his mission in the world with a style that is opposed to the worldly spirit. “He will not cry or lift up his voice, or make it heard on the street; a bruised reed he will not break, and a dimly burning wick he will not quench” (42:2-3). It is the attitude of meekness — the attitude of simplicity, of respect, of moderation and of hiddenness that is still asked today of the Lord’s disciples. How many — it is sad to say — how many of the Lord’s disciples boast that they are disciples of the Lord. Those who boast are not good disciples of the Lord. The good disciple is humble, meek, one who does good unobtrusively. In missionary work, the Christian community is called to approach others always offering and not imposing, bearing witness, sharing the concrete life of the people.

As soon as Jesus was baptized in the River Jordan, the heavens were opened and the Holy Spirit alighted on him like a dove, as a voice from heaven said: “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased” (Mt 3:17). We rediscover our own Baptism in the Feast of the Baptism. Just as Jesus is the Beloved Son of the Father, we too, reborn by water and the Holy Spirit, know we are loved children — the Father loves us all! —, the object of God’s satisfaction, brothers and sisters of many brothers and sisters, assigned with a great mission to bear witness and proclaim the Father’s boundless love to all mankind.

This Feast of the Baptism of Jesus reminds us of our own Baptism. We too were reborn in Baptism. In Baptism the Holy Spirit came down to remain within us. This is why it is important to know the date of our Baptism. We know our date of birth, but we do not always know the date of our Baptism. Certainly some of you do not know it.... Homework to do: when you return [home] ask: when was I baptized? When was I baptized? And celebrate the date of your Baptism in your heart, every year. Do it. This also does justice to the Lord who was so kind to us.

May Mary Most Holy help us to increasingly understand the gift of Baptism and to live it consistently in everyday situations.

After the Angelus the Holy Father continued:

I offer my warm greetings to you all, dear people of Rome and pilgrims: to families, parish groups, associations and individual faithful.

I greet the youth of the Focolare Movement from Colombia, Brazil, Paraguay and Korea who have assembled in Rome for a formation course on the 100th anniversary of the birth of the Servant of God Chiara Lubich.

I greet the faithful from Otranto and the “Alma Gaudia” choir from Manduria, Italy.

I wish you all a Happy Sunday. And, please do not forget to pray for me. Enjoy your lunch.
Arrivederci!

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