



The Holy See

FEAST OF THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD

POPE FRANCIS

ANGELUS

*Saint Peter's Square
Sunday, 13 January 2019*

[Multimedia]

Dear Brothers and Sisters, Good morning!

Today, at the conclusion of the Liturgical Season of Christmas, we celebrate the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord. The liturgy calls us to more fully get to know Jesus, whose birth we have just celebrated; and for this reason the Gospel (cf. Lk 3:15-16, 21-22) illustrates two important elements: Jesus' relationship with the people and Jesus' relationship with the Father.

In the narrative of the Baptism, administered to Jesus by John the Baptist in the waters of the Jordan, we see first and foremost the role of the people. Jesus is in the midst of the people. This is not just background scenery, but is an essential component of the event. Before immersing himself in the water, Jesus *'immerses' himself in the crowd*; he joins it, fully taking on the human condition, sharing everything, except sin. In his divine holiness, full of grace and mercy, the Son of God became flesh precisely to take upon himself and take away the sin of the world: taking on our miseries, our human condition. Thus today's event is also *an epiphany*, because by going to have himself baptized by John, in the midst of the repentant people, Jesus manifests the logic and meaning of his mission.

By joining the people who ask John for the Baptism of conversion, Jesus shares with them the deep desire for inner renewal. And the Holy Spirit, who descends upon him "in bodily form, as a dove" (v. 22), is a sign that with Jesus a new world is being initiated, a 'new creation' in which all

those who welcome Jesus into their life participate. The words of the Father are also addressed to each of us, that we may be reborn with Christ in Baptism: “Thou art my beloved son; with thee I am well pleased” (v. 22). This Fatherly love, which all of us received on the day of our Baptism, is a flame that was lit in our heart, and needs to be kindled by means of prayer and charity.

The second element emphasized by Luke the Evangelist is that, after his immersion in the people and in the waters of the Jordan, Jesus *‘immerses’ himself in prayer, that is, in communion with the Father*. Baptism is the beginning of Jesus’ public ministry, of his mission in the world as the envoy of the Father in order to manifest his goodness and his love for mankind. This mission is fulfilled in constant and perfect union with the Father and with the Holy Spirit. The Church’s mission too, and that of each of us, in order to be faithful and fruitful, is called to ‘graft’ ourselves onto that of Jesus. It means regenerating continually in prayer, evangelization and the apostolate, in order to bear a clear Christian witness not according to human designs, but according to the plan and style of God.

Dear brothers and sisters, the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord is a propitious opportunity to renew with gratitude and conviction the promises made at our Baptism, by committing ourselves to live in harmony with it daily. It is also very important, as I have said to you many times, to know the date of our Baptism. I could ask: ‘Who among you knows the date of his or her Baptism?’. Not everyone, to be sure. If some of you do not know it, when you get home, ask your parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles, godparents, family friends.... Ask: ‘On what date was I baptized?’. And then, do not forget it: let it be a date kept in your heart to be celebrated every year.

May Jesus, who saved us not for our own merits but in order to realize the immense goodness of the Father, make us merciful toward all. May the Virgin Mary, Mother of Mercy, be our guide and our model.

After the Angelus, Pope Francis added:

Dear brothers and sisters, I offer my greeting to all of you, dear people of Rome and pilgrims. I greet the teachers and students from Los Santos de Maimona and Talavera la Real, Spain; the parish groups from Poland and also the Polish neocatechumens — you have come to celebrate Kiko’s birthday, of course! I greet as well the faithful from Loreto and Vallemare, in the province of Rieti.

This morning, as customary on this Feast Day, I had the joy of baptizing a beautiful group of infants. Let us pray for them and for their families. And, on this occasion, I renew the invitation to all to keep ever alive and present the memory of your own Baptism. There lie the roots of our life in God; the roots of our eternal life, which Jesus gave us with his Incarnation, Passion, Death and Resurrection. In Baptism there are the roots! And let us never forget the date of our Baptism.

Tomorrow, as the Season of Christmas has concluded, we will resume with the liturgy the journey of Ordinary Time. Like Jesus after his Baptism, let us allow the Holy Spirit to guide us in all that we do. But we must invoke this of him. Let us learn to invoke the Holy Spirit more often, in our daily life, so as to be able to experience ordinary things with love, and thereby render them extraordinary.