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The Pope's words at the Angelus prayer

Before the Angelus

After the Angelus

After the celebration of Holy Mass on the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord with the rite of Baptism of Babies in the Sistine Chapel, at midday today, the Holy Father Francis appeared at the window of his study in the Vatican Apostolic Palace to pray the Angelus with the faithful and pilgrims gathered in Saint Peter's Square.

The following is the Pope's introduction to the Marian prayer:

Before the Angelus

Dear brothers and sisters, good morning!

Today's Feast of the Baptism of the Lord concludes Christmas time and invites us to think of our baptism. Jesus wished to receive baptism, preached and administered by John the Baptist in the Jordan. It was a baptism of penance: those who approached it expressed the desire to be purified from sin and, with God's help, committed themselves to beginning a new life.

We understand, then, the great *humility* of Jesus: He Who had not sinned joined the line of penitents, mingling among them, to be baptized in the waters of the river. What humility Jesus has! And in doing so, He made manifest what we celebrated at Christmas: the willingness of Jesus to immerse Himself in the river of humanity, to take upon Himself the shortcomings and weaknesses of men, to share their desire for liberation and to overcome all that separates us from God and makes us strangers to our brothers. Just as in Bethlehem, also along the banks of the Jordan, God keeps His promise to take charge of the fate of human beings, and the birth of Jesus is the tangible and definitive sign of this. He took on the burden of us all, He took us on board, in life, in

our days.

Today's Gospel emphasizes that Jesus, "when He came up out of the water, immediately He saw the heavens being torn open and the Spirit descending on Him like a dove" (*Mk 1: 10*). The *Holy Spirit*, Who had worked from the beginning of Creation and had guided Moses and the people in the desert, now descends in fullness upon Jesus to give Him the strength to fulfil His mission in the world. The Spirit is the maker of Jesus' baptism and also of our baptism. He opens the eyes of the heart to truth, to all the truth. He guides our life on the path of charity. He is the gift that the Father has given to each one of us on the day of our baptism. He, the Spirit, transmits to us the tenderness of divine forgiveness. And again He, the Holy Spirit, makes the revelatory word of the Father resonate: "You are my beloved Son" (v. 11).

The feast of the baptism of Jesus invites every Christian to *remember his own baptism*. I cannot ask you if you remember the day of your baptism, because the majority of you were babies, like me: we were baptized as babies. But I will ask you another question: do you know the date of your baptism? Do you know the day on which you were baptized? Let each one of us think. And if you do not know the date or if you have forgotten, go home and ask your mother, your grandmother, your uncle, your aunt, your grandfather, your godfather, your godmother: what is the date? And we must always have that date in our memory, because it is a date of celebration, it is the date of our initial sanctification, it is the date on which the Father gave us the Holy Spirit that makes us walk, it is the date of the great forgiveness. Do not forget: what is the date of my baptism?

Let us invoke the maternal protection of Mary Most Holy, so that all Christians may better understand the gift of Baptism and endeavour to live it with coherence, witnessing the love of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

After the Angelus

Dear brothers and sisters,

I greet all of you, faithful of Rome and pilgrims from Italy and from various countries. In particular, I greet the faithful from South Korea and those of Biella. On the feast of Jesus' Baptism, this year again I had the joy of baptizing some 34 children. Upon them and all the children who have been baptized recently, I invoke the maternal protection of the Mother of God so that, helped by the example of their parents, their godfathers, and godmothers, they may grow as disciples of the Lord.

I wish you all a happy Sunday and a good journey in the year that has just begun, thanks to the light that Jesus gave us in His birth.

Don't forget your homework: ask, "What is the date of my Baptism? On what day was I baptized?" Do you understand?

And please, don't forget to pray for me. Have a good lunch and goodbye!
