FEAST OF THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD

POPE FRANCIS

ANGELUS

Saint Peter's Square
Sunday, 7 January 2018

[Multimedia]

Dear Brothers and Sisters, Good morning!

Today's celebration of the Baptism of the Lord concludes the Christmas Season and invites us to think about our baptism. Jesus wished to receive the baptism that John the Baptist preached and administered in the Jordan. It was a baptism of repentance: those who approached expressed the wish to be purified of sins and, with the help of God, they committed to begin a new life.

Thus we understand the great *humility of Jesus*, the One who had no sin, in joining the queue of the penitents, mingling among them to be baptized in the waters of the river. How humble Jesus is! And in so doing, he manifested what we celebrated at Christmas: Jesus' willingness to immerse himself in the river of humanity, to take upon himself the failings and weaknesses of men and women, to share their wish for liberation and the triumph over all that distances one from God and renders one a stranger to brothers and sisters. As in Bethlehem, even along the banks of the Jordan, God keeps his promise to take upon himself the destiny of the human being, and Jesus is the tangible and definitive sign of it. He took all of us upon his shoulders; he carries all of us, in life, in our days.

Today's Gospel passage emphasizes that when Jesus "came up out of the water, immediately he saw the heavens opened and the Spirit descending upon him like a dove" (Mk 1:10). The *Holy Spirit*, who had worked from the beginning of creation and had led Moses and the people in the desert, now descends in fullness upon Jesus to give him the power to accomplish his mission in

the world. The Spirit is the creator of Jesus' baptism and also of our baptism. He opens the eyes of our hearts to the truth, to the whole truth. He propels our life along 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 the tenderness of divine forgiveness to us. And it is again he, the Holy Spirit, who makes the revelatory Word of the Father resonate: "You are my Son" (cf. v. 11).

The celebration of Jesus' baptism invites every Christian to *remember his or her own baptism*. I cannot ask you whether you remember the day of your baptism, because most of you were infants, like me; we were baptized as infants. But I ask you another question: do you know the date of your baptism? Do you know what day you were baptized? Each one think about it. And if you do not know the date or have forgotten it, upon returning home, ask your mom, grandma, uncle, aunt, grandpa, godfather, godmother: what is the date? We must always keep 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 who encourages us to 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, that all Christians can understand ever better the gift of baptism and commit to living it with coherence, witnessing to the love of the Father and of the Son and of the Spirit.

After the Angelus:

Dear brothers and sisters, I greet you all, faithful of Rome and pilgrims from Italy and from various countries. In particular I greet the faithful from South Korea and those from Biella.

This year too, on today's celebration of the Baptism of Jesus, I have had the joy of baptizing 34 infants. 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, godfathers and godmothers, they may grow as disciples of the Lord.

I wish everyone a happy Sunday and a good journey in the year just begun, thanks to the light that Jesus has given us in his Birth.

Do not forget the homework: what is the date of my baptism? Understood?

And please, do not forget to pray for me. Enjoy your lunch. *Arrivederci*!