



The Holy See

FEAST OF THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD

POPE FRANCIS

ANGELUS

Saint Peter's Square
Sunday, 9 January 2022

[[Multimedia](#)]

Dear brothers and sisters, *buongiorno!*

The Gospel of today's Liturgy shows us the scene with which Jesus' public life begins: he, who is the Son of God and the Messiah, goes to the banks of the Jordan River to be baptized by John the Baptist. After about 30 years of hidden life, Jesus does not present himself with a miracle, or by rising to the podium to teach. He queues up with the people who were going to receive baptism from John. Today's liturgical hymn says that the people went to be baptized with a bare soul and bare feet, humbly. This is a beautiful attitude: with a bare soul and bare feet. And Jesus shares the plight of us sinners, he *descends* towards us; he descends into the river, and into the wounded history of humanity. He immerses himself in our waters to heal them, and he immerses himself with us, in our midst. He does not rise up above us, but rather comes down towards us with a bare soul, with bare feet, like the people. He does not go on his own, nor with a selected, privileged group. No: he goes with the people. He belongs to those people and he goes with them to be baptized, with those humble people.

Let us reflect on an important point: in the moment that Jesus receives Baptism, the text says that he "was praying" (*Lk 3:21*). It is good for us to contemplate this: Jesus prays. But why? He, who is the Lord, the Son of God, prays like us? Yes, Jesus — the Gospels repeat this many times — spends a lot of time in prayer: at the beginning of every day, often at night, before making

important decisions.... His prayer is a dialogue, a relationship with the Father. Thus, in today's Gospel, we can see the "two moments" in the life of Jesus: on the one hand, he *descends* towards us into the waters of the Jordan; on the other, he *raises* his eyes and his heart, praying to the Father.

It is a great lesson for us: we are all immersed in the problems of life and in many complicated situations, called upon to face difficult moments and choices that get us down. But if we do not want to be crushed, we need to raise everything upwards. And this is exactly what prayer does. It is not an escape route; prayer is not a magic ritual or a repetition of memorized refrains. No. To pray is the way to let God act within us, to understand what he wants to communicate to us even in the most difficult situations, to pray to have the strength to go forward. Many people feel they cannot go on, and pray: "Lord, give me the strength to continue". We too, very often, have done this. Prayer helps us because it unites us to God, it opens us up to the encounter with him. Yes, prayer is the key that opens our heart to the Lord. It is dialoguing with God, it is listening to his Word, it is worshipping: remaining in silence, entrusting what we are experiencing to him. And sometimes it is also crying out to him like Job, venting with Him. Crying out like Job; He is the father; He understands well. He never gets angry with us. And Jesus prays.

Prayer — to use a beautiful image from today's Gospel — "opens the heaven" (cf. v. 21). Prayer opens the heaven: it gives life oxygen, it gives a breath of fresh air even in the midst of breathlessness and lets us see things from a broader perspective. Above all, it enables us to have the same experience of Jesus by the Jordan: it makes us feel like beloved children of the Father. When we pray, the Father says to us too, as he does to Jesus in the Gospel: "You are my beloved Son" (cf. v. 22). Being God's children began on the day of our Baptism, which immersed us in Christ and, as members of the people of God, made us become beloved children of the Father. Let us not forget the date of our Baptism! If I were to ask each one of you now: what is the date of your Baptism? Perhaps some of you do not remember. This is a beautiful thing: remembering the date of your baptism because it is our rebirth, the moment in which we became children of God with Jesus! And when you return home — if you do not know — ask your mother, your aunt, or your grandparents: "When was I baptized?", and remember that date so as to celebrate it, to thank the Lord. And today, at this moment, let us ask ourselves: how is my prayer going? Do I pray out of habit, do I pray unwillingly, just reciting formulas, or is my prayer an encounter with God? I, a sinner, always with the people of God, never isolated? Do I cultivate intimacy with God, dialogue with him, listen to his Word? Among the many things we do each day, let us not neglect prayer: let us dedicate time to it, let us use short invocations to be repeated often, let us read the Gospel every day. The prayer that opens the heaven.

And now, let us turn to Our Lady, the prayerful Virgin, who made her life into a hymn in praise of God.

After the Angelus, the Holy Father continued:

Dear brothers and sisters, I heard with sorrow that there were victims during the protests that broke out in recent days in Kazakhstan. I pray for them and for their families, and I hope that social harmony will be restored as soon as possible through the search for dialogue, justice and the common good. I entrust the Kazakh people to the protection of Our Lady, Queen of Peace of Oziornoje.

And I offer my heartfelt greeting to all of you, faithful of Rome and pilgrims from Italy and other countries. In particular I greet the group from Frattamaggiore, near Naples.

This morning, as is customary on the Sunday of the Baptism of the Lord, I baptized some children of Vatican employees. I now wish to extend my prayer and blessing to all the infants who have received or will receive Baptism during this period. May the Lord bless them and may Our Lady protect them.

And to all of you, do not forget: learn the date of your Baptism. When was I baptized? You must not forget this, and remember that day as a day of celebration.

I wish you all a happy Sunday. Please do not forget to pray for me. Enjoy your lunch. *Arrivederci!*