



The Holy See

FEAST OF THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD
CELEBRATION OF HOLY MASS AND ADMINISTRATION OF THE SACRAMENT
OF BAPTISM TO NEW-BORN BABIES

HOMILY OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS

Sistine Chapel
Sunday, 8 January 2023

[Multimedia]

Dear parents, thank you for bringing your children here, for bringing them into the Church. This is a good day, because we never forget when we were baptized. It is like a birthday, because with Baptism we are reborn into Christian life. Therefore, I advise you to teach your children the date of their Baptism as a new birthday: so that every year they may remember and thank God for this grace of having become Christians. This is a task I advise you to do.

Then, let us reflect a little on the fact that these children you are bringing now are starting out on a road, but it is up to you and the godparents to help them go forward on this road. We are taught to pray as children: may they learn to pray as children, at least to do so with their hands, with gestures... May they learn prayer as children, because prayer is what gives them strength throughout their life: in good moments, to thank God, and in bad moments, to find strength. It is the first thing that you must teach: how to pray.

And to pray also to Our Lady, who is the Mother, our Mother. It is said that when someone is angry with the Lord, or drifts away from him, Our Lady is always near to make way for him or her to return. It is a saying. The Lord is always close to us, but Our Lady is the mother, and the mother is always closer than the father. Why? Because that is how it is. Mothers are like that, and that is great. May they learn to be Christians.

Now they are all silent, and that is good. But perhaps someone will “give the cue”, begin. And since babies are symphonic, they will all follow suit. Let them shout, let them cry. Perhaps some will cry out of hunger: nurse them. With all freedom. The important thing is that today this celebration may be a feast day, the feast of the beginning of a beautiful Christian journey, in which you will help your children to go forward. Perhaps some are overdressed and hot; let them be comfortable; may all be comfortable.

We celebrate this beginning of the journey with them. And it is up to you to help them move forward. Because I finish here, but you will continue all your life!

Thank you for this decision to bring them to Baptism. And now let us continue the celebration.

L'Osservatore Romano, Weekly Edition in English, 13 January 2023