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Angelus: the Baptism of Jesus, gentle and humble servant

At midday the Holy Father appeared at the window of his study to pray the Angelus with thousands of faithful in St. Peter's Square, and to reflect on the readings of the day's liturgy. Among the penitent crowd that advances towards John the Baptist to receive Baptism in the Jordan, there is also Jesus. Upon seeing Him in the multitude, John tried to deter Him, saying: "I need to be baptised by you, and do you come to me?". "The Baptist is aware of the great distance between him and Jesus", affirmed Francis. "But Jesus came precisely to close the distance between man and God: if He is all on the side of God, He is also all on the side of man, and He unites that which is divided. Therefore He asks John to baptise Him, in order to fulfil every justice, that is, to realise the Father's plan, which passes along the path of obedience and solidarity with fragile and sinful man, the way of humility and full closeness to God and His children. Because God is so close to His children, so close".

"At the moment in which John baptises Jesus, from the waters of the River Jordan, the voice of God the Father is heard from above: 'This is my beloved Son, with Whom I am well pleased'. And at the same time the Holy Spirit, in the form of a dove, alights upon Jesus, who publicly begins His mission of salvation; a mission characterised by a style, the style of the humble and meek servant, armed only with the strength of truth, as Isaiah had prophesied: 'He will not cry out or raise His voice ... A bruised reed He will not break, and a dimly burning wick He will not extinguish; He will faithfully bring forth justice'. A humble and meek servant".

"This is the style of Jesus, and also the missionary style of Christ's disciples: announcing the Gospel with gentleness and firmness, without arrogance or imposition. The real mission is never proselytism, but attraction to Christ, from the strong union with Him in prayer, adoration and concrete charity, which is service to Jesus in the least of our brothers. In imitation of Jesus, good and merciful Shepherd, and inspired by His grace, we are called to make our life a joyful witness that illuminates the path that brings hope and love".

"This feast day allows us to rediscover the beauty of being a baptised people, that is, sinners – all of us – sinners saved by the grace of Christ, who have truly entered through the work of the Holy Spirit into the filial relationship of Jesus with the Father, welcomed into the bosom of the mother Church, made capable of a fraternity that knows no boundaries and barriers".

"May the Virgin Mary help all Christians preserve an always lively and grateful awareness of our Baptism", he concluded, "and to faithfully follow the path inaugurated by this sacrament of our rebirth. And always with

humility, gentleness and firmness”.
