

HOLY SEE PRESS OFFICE
OFICINA DE PRENSA DE LA SANTA SEDE



BUREAU DE PRESSE DU SAINT-SIEGE
PRESSEAMT DES HEILIGEN STUHLS

BOLLETTINO

SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE

N. 230108a

Sunday 08.01.2023

Holy Mass in the Sistine Chapel with the rite of Baptism of infants

At 9.30 this morning, Feast of the Baptism of the Lord, the Holy Father Francis presided over Holy Mass in the Sistine Chapel, during which he administered the Sacrament of Baptism to thirteen babies.

The following is the impromptu homily delivered by the Holy Father Francis, following the reading from the Holy Gospel:

Homily of the Holy Father

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 Baptism makes us reborn to Christian life. Therefore, I advise you to teach your children the date of their Baptism, like a new birthday: so that every year they may remember and thank God for this grace of becoming Christians. This is a task I advise you to undertake.

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 will be what gives them strength during 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 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 this is good. May they learn to be Christians.

Now they are all silent, and that is good. But perhaps someone will "give the word" and will 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, the feast of the beginning of a good Christian path, in which you will help your children to go forward. Perhaps some are overdressed and hot; let them be comfortable, that they 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 will finish here, but you will continue all your life!

Thank you for this decision to bring them for Baptism. And now we will continue the celebration.
