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BUREAU DE PRESSE DU SAINT-SIEGE
PRESSEAMT DES HEILIGEN STUHLS

BOLLETTINO

SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE

N. 240107a

Sunday 07.01.2024

Holy Mass in the Sistine Chapel with the Rite of Baptism of Babies

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 some babies.

The following is the impromptu homily delivered by the Pope after the reading of the Holy Gospel, and his words before the final Blessing:

Homily of the Holy Father

Dear brothers and sisters,

We are here to baptize, to give the gift of faith to our children. And they are the protagonists in this ceremony: they can speak, go, shout... They are in charge, because it is their feast day: they will receive the most beautiful gift of all, *the gift of faith*, the gift of the Lord.

If they cry – for the time being they are silence, but it is enough for one to strike the note and the concert will start – then let them cry; if they are hungry, nurse them, calmly, here. If they are hot, take off some of their clothing, because at times the heat is bad for them.

They are the protagonists, because today they will also bear witness before us to how one receives faith: innocently, with openness of heart.

And to you, parents and godparents, I wish that your life will be of help to these children, of help for their growth. I hope that you will accompany them in their growth, because this is a way of helping, so that the faith may grow in them. Thank you very much for your witness, for having brought them here to receive the faith.

And now, let us continue with the rite of Baptism.

[Impromptu words before the final Blessing].

Before giving you the Blessing, I thank you for starting the life of your children with Baptism. And remember, make sure they know the date of their Baptism, because it is the date of birth. And likewise for every one of us. If I ask you: "What is your date of birth?", I don't know if everyone will know. But think carefully: the date of birth is like a birthday, the date on which I received the grace of the Lord and I became a Christian. Teach your children this, to celebrate it every year.
