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## The Pope's words at the Angelus prayer

Following the celebration of Holy Mass in the Sistine Chapel on the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord, with the Rite of Baptism of Babies, at midday the Holy Father Francis appeared at the window of his study in the Vatican Apostolic Palace to pray the Angelus with the faithful and pilgrims gathered in Saint Peter's Square.

The following are the Pope's words of introduction to the Marian prayer:

### Before the Angelus

Dear brothers and sisters, *buongiorno!*

Today we celebrate the Baptism of the Lord (cf. *Mk* 1.7-11). It occurs at the river Jordan, where John – for this reason known as the “Baptist” – performs a rite of purification, which expresses the commitment to renounce sin and to convert. The people go to be baptized humbly, sincerely, and as the Liturgy says, “barefoot and bare of soul”, and Jesus goes there too, inaugurating His ministry: He thus shows that He wants to be close to the sinners, to come for them, for us, for all of sinners!

And some extraordinary things happen on that very day. John the Baptist says something unusual, publicly acknowledging Jesus, seemingly equal to everyone else, as one who is “mightier” (v. 7) than him, who “will baptize you with the Holy Spirit” (v. 8). Then the heavens open, the Holy Spirit descends upon Jesus like a dove (f. v. 10) and the voice of the Father proclaims from on high, “Thou art my beloved Son; with thee I am well pleased” (v. 11).

All this, while on the one hand it reveals to us that Jesus is the Son of God, on the other it speaks to us of our Baptism, which has made us in turn children of God, because Baptism makes us children of God.

Baptism: it is God who comes into us, purifies, heals our heart, makes us forever His children, His people, His

family, heirs to Paradise (cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1279). And God becomes intimate to us and He does not leave us anymore. This is why it is important to remember the day of our Baptism, and also to know the date. I ask all of you: you, each one of you, think: “Do I remember the date of my Baptism?”. If you do not remember, when you go back home, ask what it is, so as not to forget it any more, because it is a new birthday, because with your Baptism you were born into the life of grace. Let us thank the Lord for Baptism. Let us also thank Him for the parents who brought us to the font, for those who administered the Sacrament, for the godfather, for the godmother, for the community in which we received Him. Celebrate your own Baptism. It is a new birthday.

And we can ask ourselves: am I aware of the immense gift I carry within me through Baptism? Do I acknowledge, in my life, the light of the presence of God, who sees me as His beloved son, His beloved daughter? And now, in memory of our Baptism, let us welcome God’s presence within us. We can do so with the sign of the cross, which traces in us the memory of the grace of God, who loves us and wishes to stay with us. That sign of the cross reminds us of this. Let us do it together: *In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.*

And do not forget the date of your Baptism, which is a birthday.

May Mary, temple of the Spirit, help us to celebrate and welcome the wonders that the Lord works in us.

### After the Angelus

Dear brothers and sisters!

On today’s Feast of the Baptism of the Lord, I baptized some newborns. Let us pray for them and for their families, extending these prayers to all the children who will receive holy Baptism in these days.

Today the ecclesial communities of the East who follow the Julian calendar are celebrating the Holy Nativity. In a spirit of joyful fraternity, I wish that the birth of the Lord Jesus fills them with light, charity and peace.

I invite you to join in my prayer for the unconditional liberation of all the people currently kidnapped in Colombia. This act, which is a duty before God, will also promote a climate of reconciliation and peace in the country.

I am very close to the peoples of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, afflicted by floods in recent days. And please, let us continue to pray for peace: for peace in Ukraine, in Palestine, in Israel and all over the world.

And I greet you all, pilgrims from Italy and many parts of the world, in particular the young people of the parish of the *Santissimo Crocifisso* in Rome – the yellows over there! – the *Scout Milano 35* group and the “*Totus tuus*” Association from Potenza.

I wish you all a happy feast day. And please, do not forget to pray for me. Enjoy your lunch, and *arrivederci!*

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