



# The Holy See

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FEAST OF THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD

**BENEDICT XVI**

**ANGELUS**

*Saint Peter's Square  
Sunday, 8 January 2012*

**(Video)**

*Dear Brothers and Sisters,*

Today we are celebrating the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord. This morning I conferred the Sacrament of Baptism on 16 infants and for this reason I would like to offer a brief reflection on the fact that we are children of God. First of all, however, let us start with our being, quite simply, children: this is the fundamental condition that brings us all together. We are not all parents, but we are certainly all children.

Being born is never a choice, we are not asked first whether we wish to be born. Yet, in life, we can develop a free attitude with regard to life itself: we can regard it as a gift and, in a certain sense “become” what we are: children. This transition marks a turning point of maturity in our existence and in our relationship with our parents, which is filled with gratitude. It is a transition that also renders us capable in turn of being parents, not biologically, but morally.

Also before God we are all children. God is at the root of every created being’s life and is the Father of every human person in a special way: he has a unique and personal relationship with every human being. Each one of us is wanted and loved by God. And also in this relationship with God, we can be “reborn”, so to speak, in other words become what we are. This happens through faith, through a profound and personal “yes” to God as the origin and foundation of our existence.

With this “yes” I receive life as a gift of the Father who is in Heaven, a Parent whom I do not see but in whom I believe and whom, in the depths of my heart, I feel is my Father and the Father of all my brethren in humanity, an immensely good and faithful Father.

On what is this faith in God the Father based? It is based on Jesus Christ: he himself and his history reveal the Father to us, enable us to know him as much is possible in this world. Believing that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, makes it possible to be “born from above”, that is, from God, who is Love (cf. Jn 3:3).

Moreover, let us bear in mind once again that no individual makes him or herself a human being. We are born without doing anything ourselves, the *passivity* of being born precedes the *activity* of what we ourselves do. It is also the same at the level of being Christian: no one can become Christian solely by one’s own will, being Christian is also a gift that comes before our own action: we must be reborn in a new birth. St John says: “to all who received him... he gave power to become children of God” (Jn 1:12).

This is the meaning of the Sacrament of Baptism. Baptism is this new birth that precedes our own action. With our faith we can go to meet Christ, but he alone can make us Christian and give to our will and to this desire of ours the response, dignity and power to become children of God, which we ourselves do not possess.

Dear friends, this Sunday of the Baptism of the Lord brings Christmas Time to an end. Let us give thanks to God for this great mystery which is a source of regeneration for the Church and for the whole world. God made himself the Son of Man so that man might become a son of God. Let us therefore renew our joy in being children, as men and women and as Christians; *born* and *reborn* to a new divine existence. Born from the love of a father and a mother and reborn from the love of God through Baptism.

Let us ask the Virgin Mary, Mother of Christ and of all who believe in him, to help us to live truly as children of God, not in words, or not only in words, but with deeds. St John writes further: “this is his commandment, that we should believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us” (1 Jn 3:23).

### **After the Angelus:**

I am happy to greet all the English-speaking pilgrims and visitors present for this Angelus prayer. In today’s Feast, the Baptism of Jesus, God the Father bears witness to his Only-Begotten Son, and the Holy Spirit anoints him for his imminent public ministry. Let us ask for the courage to be always faithful to the life of communion with the Holy Trinity which we received in Baptism. May God bless all of you abundantly!

I wish you all a good Sunday and once again, every good thing for the year that has just begun.

Have a good Sunday, Happy New Year, best wishes, thank you.

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