



The Holy See

FEAST OF THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD
CELEBRATION OF HOLY MASS AND ADMINISTRATION OF THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM
TO NEW-BORN BABIES

HOMILY OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS

Sistine Chapel
Sunday, 13 January 2019

[Multimedia]

At the beginning of the ceremony, you were asked a question: “What do you ask for your children?” And you all said: “Faith”. You ask the Church for faith for your children, and today they will receive the Holy Spirit and the gift of faith, each within their heart, within their soul. But this faith has to develop, it has to grow. Yes, someone may tell me: “Yes, yes, they have to study it...”. Yes, when they will attend catechism classes, they will study the faith well; they will learn catechesis. However, before being studied, faith should be *transmitted*, and this is a task that is up to you. It is a task that you receive today: *to transmit the faith*, the transmission of the faith. And this is done at *home*. Because faith is always transmitted “in dialect”: the dialect of the family, in the spirit of the home.

This is your task: to transmit the faith by example, with words, teaching how to make *the sign of the Cross*. This is important. You see, there are children who do not know how to make the sign of the Cross. [One says]: “Make the sign of the Cross”: and they do something like this; one cannot understand what it is. First of all, teach them this.

But what is important is to transmit the faith *with your life of faith*: that they may see the love between spouses, that they may see peace at home, that they may see that Jesus is there. And allow me this word of advice — forgive me, but I offer you this advice —: never quarrel in front of the children, never. It is normal for husbands and wives to quarrel; it is normal. The opposite would

be strange. Do it, but so that they do not hear, that they do not see. You cannot imagine the distress that a child feels when he or she sees their parents quarrel. Allow me to offer this advice which will help you transmit the faith. Is it bad to quarrel? Not always, but it is normal, it is normal. But so the children do not see, do not hear, because it is distressing.

And now, let us continue the ceremony of Baptism, but keep this in mind: your task is to transmit the faith to them. To transmit it at home because that is where faith is learned; it is then studied in catechism classes, but faith [is received] at home.

And before continuing, I would like to tell you another thing: you know that today the children are feeling that they are in a strange environment, a bit too hot, they are covered up.... And they feel the stuffy air.... Then they cry because they are hungry; they are hungry. And a third reason for their crying is "precautionary crying". A curious thing: they do not know what will happen and they think: "I will cry first, then we will see.... It is a form of defence. I tell you: let them be comfortable. Be careful not to cover them up too much. And if they cry out of hunger, breastfeed them. To the mothers I say: feed the children, do not worry, the Lord wants this. Because where is the danger? That they have also a polyphonic vocation: one starts to cry, and the other makes the counterpoint to him, and then the other, and in the end it is a chorus of crying!

And so let us continue with this ceremony, with the awareness that it is up to you to transmit the faith.