



At his general audience on Wednesday Pope Francis concluded his series of reflections on the sacrament of Baptism, speaking of the spiritual fruits that it brings to each believer.

The Pope noted that right from the first centuries of Christianity, it became a tradition to dress those who had received the waters of Baptism in a new, white clothes to symbolise the new and transfigured life received through Christ and the Holy Spirit.

If we are clothed in Christ, St Paul reminded the early believers in his letter to the Colossians, we must take on the virtues of “compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience”. Bear with each other, he said, and forgive each other as the Lord forgave you. Above all, put on the virtue of love, which binds all together in perfect unity.

Baptismal candle

Those being baptised are also given a candle, lighted from the Easter candle, as the priest says the words, “Receive the light of Christ”. These words, the Pope said, remind us that we are not the light, but rather we are called to receive the light of Christ who has risen from the dead and overcome the shadows of evil.

Just as the Easter candle gives light to all our individual candles, so the love of the Risen Lord inflames the hearts of all the baptised. That is why, in the first centuries, Baptism was known as the sacrament of Illumination.

This is our Christian vocation, Pope Francis continued, to walk as sons and daughters of the light, persevering in faith. If children are being baptised, then it is the task of parents and godparents to nurture the flame, helping them to persevere in their faith. Christian education, he said, is a right of each child so that they can gradually come to know the plan of God for them.

The living presence of Christ in us, the Pope said, is the lamp which lights our way, guides our decision-making and warms our hearts as we travel together towards our encounter with the Lord. On that day, he said, there will be no more night and we will no longer need our lamps because the light of God will illuminate everything.

Calling on God in the Our Father

The sacrament of Baptism, the Pope said, concludes with the Our Father, as those who are newly baptised learn to call God 'Father' as they receive the fullness of his Holy Spirit.

Pope Francis concluded his catechesis with the words of his recent Apostolic Exhortation 'Rejoice and Be Glad', urging his listeners to let the grace of Baptism bear fruit in their lives.