

Reflection Baptism of the Lord Year B 2024

From a homily by Benedict XVI.

In baptism we seek the security of a family that we cannot guarantee on our own. We seek the protection of the Author of life who conquered death and holds the keys to the future. *“Baptism inserts us into communion with Christ and therefore gives life, life itself.”* We enter an eternal “gathering of friends” that consoles and accompanies us throughout our lives, preparing us for the life to come.

The relational gift conferred by baptism must be accepted and lived. The sacramental dialogue secures both noes and yeses to declare our friendship with God. We say no to temptation, sin, and the devil. The ancient church renounced the *“pompa diabuli*, (the promise of life in abundance), coming from the pagan world, from its permissiveness and from *living as one pleases.”* The enticements of that pagan promises satisfaction only to deliver an “anti-culture of death” and a “corruption of joy”. Saying no to the wrong preserves and protects our familial relationship expressed through the Father’s love, the companionship of the Holy Spirit sent to guide us, and the salvation and peace brought to us through the Son. Relationships governed by love show respect for others both in our noes and in our yeses. The Ten Commandments provide a good guide, *“a yes to God who gives meaning to life (the first three commandments); a yes to the family (Fourth Commandment), a yes to life (Fifth Commandment); a yes to responsible love (Sixth Commandment); a yes to solidarity, to social responsibility, to justice (Seventh Commandment); a yes to the truth (Eighth Commandment), a yes to respect for others and their belongings (Ninth and Tenth Commandments).”*

Even though we err, our relationship continues through commitment. Do not give up! God’s abundant mercy is there to restore us when we fail, and His grace is able to bring forth love and fidelity, even in the midst of difficulties, including silence that surrounds our own growth in faith and devotion.

Let us embrace the gift of life with joyful yeses and hearty noes as we return to living in ordinary time, accompanied and consoled by the Church as we journey ahead.