



Encountering the Light of Faith
Lumen Fidei Online Retreat: Day 3
Retreat Guide



Day 3 Theme:

Baptism: Discovering the Gift of Faith

"No one baptizes himself, just as no one comes into the world by himself. Baptism is something we receive" (*Lumen Fidei*, 41).

With these words, Pope Francis states something obvious: Just as there is no such thing as a "self-made human," just so, the "self-made Christian" does not exist. And yet, in a society where the "myth of individualism" reigns, what is obvious is not always common sense! Indeed, many "think that baptism is merely a way of symbolizing the confession of faith, a ... tool for those who require images and signs, while in itself ultimately unnecessary" (LF, 41).

However, is this true? Does it merely suffice to "accept Jesus as one's personal Lord and Savior" in order to become a Christian?

Jesus reveals God as "Our Father." This implies that being a Christian, being a disciple of Jesus, is being a member of God's family –a family in which the waters of Baptism are thicker than the blood of our natural families. Now, do you know anyone who can make a *unilateral decision* to join *someone else's* family? Just so, without God's gift, his "welcome" (cf. LF,43), it is impossible to become his sons and daughters. Baptism is the sign and sacrament of God's gift of a "new filial identity" (LF 42) - a new way of being and acting (implying a laying aside of the old way) - whereby "we become a new creation and God's adopted children" (LF 41).

For this reason, Pope Francis teaches: "Those who are baptized are set in a new context, entrusted to a new environment, a new and shared way of acting, in the Church. Baptism makes us see, then, that faith is not the achievement of isolated individuals; it is not an act which someone can perform on his own, but rather something which must be received by entering into the ecclesial [Church] communion which transmits God's gift" (LF 41).

Day 3:

Space for Reflection

1. Pope Francis, giving voice to Scripture and Catholic tradition, teaches us that "In baptism we become a new creation and God's adopted children" (LF, 41). As your faith has matured, how has your experience of being a child of God grown, and how has your trust in the Father's protective love affected your relationships and life's decisions?
2. Who brought you to baptism and who baptized you? Have you continued to maintain a relationship with your godparent(s), and with the priest (or deacon) who baptized you?
3. Were you given a baptismal (or saint's) name? What does this name (and saint) mean to you? How have they affected your experience and journey of faith?
4. How do you celebrate and renew your baptismal promises at Easter? Do you observe the anniversary of your baptism? How have your baptismal promises (i.e., your formal renunciation of sin and profession of faith) given shape to your experience and journey of faith?