

EUCHALET

24 June 2018

Solemnity of the Birth of St. John the Baptist

Destined for Great Things

The birth of John the Baptist was a turning point in the history of salvation. With him, centuries of expectation and longing came to an end, and the time of fulfillment – the coming of the Messiah – began to dawn. The circumstances surrounding the conception and the birth of John showed that he belonged to the category of great prophets like Samuel and Jeremiah.

John's mission was to introduce the Messiah to the crowds as "the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world," while declaring himself unworthy even to unfasten the strap of the Messiah's sandals. This makes John a real giant of loyalty and humility, two virtues for which he will be remembered with admiration in all centuries and which we should do our best to practise.



INTRODUCTORY RITES



Entrance Antiphon

(To be recited only when no Entrance Hymn is sung.)

A man was sent from God, whose name was John. He came to testify to the light, to prepare a people fit for the Lord.

Greeting

P –The grace and peace from God our Father, the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit be with you all!

All –**And with your Spirit!**

Penitential Act

P –As we prepare to celebrate this Eucharist in honor of St. John the Baptist, let us call to mind our sins and heed his invi-

tation to open our hearts in welcome to the Lord. *(Pause)*

P –Lord Jesus, John the Baptist leaped for joy in the womb of his mother because of your presence. Lord, have mercy!

All –**Lord, have mercy!**

P –Lord Jesus, your preaching of the Good News was prepared by John the Baptist. Christ, have mercy!

All –**Christ, have mercy!**

P –Lord Jesus, you were baptized by John in the Jordan and received from him your first disciples. Lord, have mercy!

All –**Lord, have mercy!**

P –May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life.

All –**Amen!**

Gloria

All – Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to people of good will. We praise you, we bless you, we adore you, we glorify you, we give you thanks for your great glory, Lord God, heavenly King, O God, almighty Father.

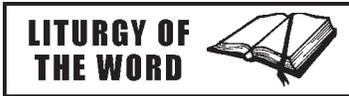
Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son, Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us; you take away the sins of the world, receive our prayer; you are seated at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us. For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen!

Collect (Opening Prayer)

P –O God, who raised up Saint John the Baptist to make ready a nation fit for Christ the Lord, give your people, we pray, the grace of spiritual joys and direct the hearts of all the faithful into the way of salvation and peace.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

All–Amen!



1st Reading *Is 49:1-6*

We will now hear the second oracle of the “Servant of the Lord.” Although the common Christian interpretation sees in the Servant a prophetic image of the Messiah, today’s liturgy of the word refers this oracle to John the Baptist, the Messiah’s forerunner.

R –A proclamation from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah

Hear me, O coastlands, listen, O distant peoples. The Lord called me from birth, from my mother’s womb he gave me my name. He made of me a sharp-edged sword and concealed me in the shadow of his arm. He made me a polished arrow, in his quiver he hid me. You are my servant, he said to me, Israel, through whom I show my glory.

Though I thought I had toiled in vain, and for nothing, uselessly, spent my strength, yet my reward is with the Lord, my recompense is with my God. For now the Lord has spoken who formed me as his servant from the womb, that Jacob may be brought back to him and Israel gathered to him; and I am made glorious in the sight of the Lord, and my God is now my strength! It is too little, he says, for you to be my servant, to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and restore the survivors of Israel; I will make you a light to the nations, that my salva-

tion may reach to the ends of the earth.

The Word of the Lord!

All–Thanks be to God!

Responsorial Psalm *Ps 139*

R –*I praise you, for I am wonderfully made!*

R. M. Velez



*** O Lord, you have probed me and you know me; you know when I sit and when I stand; you understand my thoughts from afar. My journeys and my rest you scrutinize, with all my ways you are familiar. **R.****

*** Truly you have formed my inmost being; you knit me in my mother’s womb. I give you thanks that I am fearfully, wonderfully made; wonderful are your works. **R.****

*** My soul also you knew full well; nor was my frame unknown to you when I was fashioned in the depths of the earth. **R.****

2nd Reading *Acts 13:22-26*

In his preaching, the Apostle Paul echoed the message of the four Gospels: John’s humble and honest admission that he was not the Messiah, but only his forerunner.

R –A proclamation from the Acts of the Apostles

In those days, Paul said: “God raised up David as their king; of him God testified, ‘I have found David, son of Jesse, a man after my own heart; he will carry out my every wish.’ From this man’s descendants God, according to his promise, has brought to Israel a savior, Jesus. John heralded his coming

by proclaiming a baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel; and as John was completing his course, he would say, ‘What do you suppose that I am? I am not he. Behold, one is coming after me; I am not worthy to unfasten the sandals of his feet.’

My brothers, children of the family of Abraham, and those others among you who are God-fearing, to us this word of salvation has been sent.”

The Word of the Lord!

All–Thanks be to God!

Gospel Acclamation *Lk 1:76*

All–Alleluia! Alleluia!

You, child, will be called prophet of the Most High, for you will go before the Lord to prepare his way. Alleluia! Alleluia!

Gospel *Lk 1:57-66.80*

Today’s Gospel passage narrates the fulfillment of the promise of a child made by the angel Gabriel to Zechariah when he was ministering in the Temple. These events sparked a series of speculations on the future of the child whose extraordinary conception and the happenings at his circumcision manifested that God had some mysterious plan for him.

P –The Lord be with you!

All–And with your spirit!

P –A proclamation from the holy Gospel according to Mark

All–Glory to you, O Lord!

When the time arrived for Elizabeth to have her child, she gave birth to a son. Her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown his great mercy toward her, and they rejoiced with her. When they came on the eighth day to circumcise the child, they were going to call him Zechariah after his father, but his mother said in reply, “No. He will be called John.” But they answered

her, "There is no one among your relatives who has this name." So they made signs, asking his father what he wished him to be called. He asked for a tablet and wrote, "John is his name," and all were amazed. Immediately his mouth was opened, his tongue freed, and he spoke blessing God. Then fear came upon all their neighbors, and all these matters were discussed throughout the hill country of Judea. All who heard these things took them to heart, saying, "What, then, will this child be?" For surely the hand of the Lord was with him. The child grew and became strong in spirit, and he was in the desert until the day of his manifestation to Israel.

The Gospel of the Lord!
All—Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ!

Homily

Profession of Faith

(Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed)

All—I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven, (*bow*)* and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man.* For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father

and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen!

Prayer of the Faithful

P —All of us are destined for great things in the plan of God, but often we lack the courage and the strength to live up to our calling. With full confidence, let us implore the Lord's assistance as we pray:

All—Lord, graciously hear us!

C —For the whole Church, called to continue the mission of John the Baptist: May she constantly prepare the hearts of people to welcome Jesus and live according to his teaching. Let us pray! **R.**

C —For the Holy Father, the Bishops, and all other spiritual leaders in our communities: May they be as zealous and as strong as John the Baptist was, and inspire us with their good example. Let us pray! **R.**

C —For all parents and teachers, and those responsible for the youth: May their educational endeavors be rooted in the Word of God and in faithfulness to His plan. Let us pray! **R.**

C —For all of us gathered here to honor St. John the Baptist: May we also follow his example in the fulfillment of our duty even when that includes defeats and suffering. Let us pray! **R.**

C —Let us pray in silence for our personal intentions. (*Pause*)
 Let us pray! **R.**

P —Lord God, You have destined us for great things in Your Kingdom. Grant us the grace to respond to Your trust with generous faithfulness, in imitation of John the Baptist, who served You generously and gave his life in witness to the truth. Through Christ our Lord.

All—Amen!



Preparation of the Offerings

P —Pray, brethren. . .

All—May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands, for the praise and glory of his name, for our good and the good of all his holy Church.

Prayer over the Offerings

P —We place these offerings on your altar, O Lord, to celebrate with fitting honor the nativity of him who both foretold the coming of the world's Savior and pointed him out when he came.

Who lives and reigns for ever and ever.

All—Amen!

Preface on the Mission of the Precursor

P —It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere to give you thanks, Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God, through Christ our Lord.

In his Precursor, Saint John the Baptist, we praise your great glory, for you consecrated him for a singular honor among those born of women.

His birth brought great rejoicing; even in the womb he leapt for joy at the coming of human salvation. He alone of all the prophets pointed out the Lamb of redemption.

And to make holy the flowing waters, he baptized the very author of Baptism and was privileged to bear him supreme witness by the shedding of his blood.

And so, with the Powers of heaven, we worship you constantly on earth, and before your majesty without end we acclaim:

All—Holy, holy, holy . . .

Memorial Acclamation

P —Let us proclaim the mystery of faith.

All—When we eat this bread and drink this cup, we proclaim your death, Lord Jesus, until you come again!

COMMUNION RITE



All—Our Father...

P —Deliver us, Lord...

All—For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and for ever.

Sign of Peace

Breaking of the Bread

All—Lamb of God...

Communion

P —Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the Supper of the Lamb.

All—Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.

Communion Antiphon

(To be recited only when no Communion Hymn is sung.)

Through the tender mercy of our God, the Dawn from on high will visit us.

Prayer after Communion

P —Having feasted at the banquet of the heavenly Lamb, we pray, O Lord, that, finding joy in the nativity of Saint John the Baptist, your Church may know as the author of her rebirth the Christ whose coming John foretold.

Who lives and reigns for ever and ever.

All—Amen!

CONCLUDING RITES



P —The Lord be with you.

All—And with your spirit!

P —May almighty God bless you: the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

All—Amen!

P —Go in peace to love and serve the Lord as John the Baptist did.

All—Thanks be to God!

The Child Destined for Great Things

Chosen before his conception to be the herald of the Messiah, John already caused quite a stir at his circumcision when his elderly father Zechariah regained his ability to speak, after more than nine months of ominous silence. People wondered what that child would be. The Lord had, indeed, great plans for him, for he was to prepare for the Lord a people well-disposed. (*See Lk 1:17.*)

Thirty years later, when John started preaching and administering a baptism of repentance along the banks of the Jordan River, the stir he caused was much greater. So great, in fact, that people from all over Palestine and even from Jerusalem flocked to him with expectation and trust. Not a few concluded that the promised Messiah had finally arrived.

But John was an honest and righteous man. He knew that “he was not the light, but had come to testify to the light” (*Jn 1:8*). His mission was to prepare the way for the Messiah by calling people to conversion. John considered himself only as a feeble voice shouting in the desert, “Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths!”

That is why, right at the height of his popularity, he did not hesitate to state that he was not at all the Messiah but only his herald, and that he considered himself unworthy even to untie the strap of his master’s sandals.

Nor was that all. Shortly after, as Jesus was passing by, John directed his own disciples’ attention to him as he proclaimed: “Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.” That was his veiled way of saying that Jesus was the man to be welcomed and followed by all because he was, indeed, the awaited Messiah.

As more and more people became Jesus’ disciples and John’s followers started feeling worried about their dwindling numbers, the Baptizer soared to new heights as he declared: “Now my joy is complete. He must increase while I must decrease!” (*Jn 3:29-30*).

John was humble and honest because he was a man of God and a man of principles. He knew what was right and did it, without hesitation or second thoughts. He knew what was wrong and opposed it without fear or compromise. John had the courage to call a spade a spade even when that hurt some people in authority, including King Herod Antipas himself who had scandalized everyone by taking the wife of his brother Philip. While all others in Galilee, including the religious authorities of those days, preferred to keep quiet or just whisper their disapproval in small circles of friends, John didn’t. He spoke up clearly and fearlessly for all to hear and know that adultery was wrong even when the one committing it was the highest authority in the land.

This cost John his freedom. Eventually it would cost him his life. But he was not afraid. He knew that such had been the fate of many prophets. Even when chained physically, his spirit remained absolutely free, and from behind the bars of his prison he made his last attempts to set King Herod free from the prison of sin by reminding him that God’s moral law binds rulers as well as subjects.

Before he died, John received from the Divine Teacher the highest praise one could get: “I solemnly assure you, history has not known a man born of woman greater than John the Baptizer.” Such, indeed, was John — the new Elijah, the last of the prophets of the Old Testament, and the first of Jesus’ disciples, after Mary Most Holy.



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