

**ENTRANCE ANTIPHON**

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.

**GLORIA**

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**

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. **Amen.**

**FIRST READING**

Isaiah 49:1-6

A reading from the prophet Isaiah.

Islands, listen to me,  
pay attention, remotest peoples.  
The Lord called me before I was born,  
from my mother's womb he pronounced my name.

He made my mouth a sharp sword,  
and hid me in the shadow of his hand.  
He made me into a sharpened arrow,  
and concealed me in his quiver.

He said to me, "You are my servant (Israel)  
in whom I shall be glorified";  
while I was thinking, "I have toiled in vain,  
I have exhausted myself for nothing";  
and all the while my cause was with the Lord,  
my reward with my God.  
I was honoured in the eyes of the Lord,  
my God was my strength.

And now the Lord has spoken,  
he who formed me in the womb to be his servant,  
to bring Jacob back to him,  
to gather Israel to him:  
"It is not enough for you to be my servant,  
to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back  
the survivors of Israel;  
I will make you the light of the nations  
so that my salvation may reach to the ends of  
the earth."

The word of the Lord.  
**Thanks be to God.**

**PSALM**

Psalm 138

Response:

**I thank you for the wonder of my being.**

1. O Lord, you search me and you know me,  
you know my resting and my rising,  
you discern my purpose from afar.  
You mark when I walk or lie down,  
all my ways lie open to you. (R.)
2. For it was you who created my being,  
knit me together in my mother's womb.  
I thank you for the wonder of my being,  
for the wonders of all your creation. (R.)
3. Already you knew my soul,  
my body held no secret from you  
when I was being fashioned in secret  
and moulded in the depths of the earth.  
(R.)

**SECOND READING**

Acts 13:22-26

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.

Paul said: "God made David the king of our  
ancestors, of whom he approved in these  
words, 'I have selected David son of Jesse, a  
man after my own heart, who will carry out  
my whole purpose.' To keep his promise,  
God has raised up for Israel one of David's  
descendants, Jesus, as Saviour, whose  
coming was heralded by John when he  
proclaimed a baptism of repentance for the  
whole people of Israel. Before John ended his  
career he said, 'I am not the one you imagine  
me to be; that one is coming after me and I  
am not fit to undo his sandal.'

"My brothers, sons of Abraham's race,  
and all you who fear God, this message of  
salvation is meant for you."

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.****GOSPEL ACCLAMATION****Alleluia, alleluia!**

**As for you, little child, you shall be called  
a prophet of God, the Most High.  
You shall go ahead of the Lord  
to prepare his ways before him. Alleluia!**

**GOSPEL**

Luke 1:57-66.80

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke.

The time came for Elizabeth to have her  
child, and she gave birth to a son; and when  
her neighbours and relations heard that the  
Lord had shown her so great a kindness, they  
shared her joy.

Now on the eighth day they came to  
circumcise the child; they were going to call  
him Zechariah after his father, but his mother  
spoke up. "No," she said, "he is to be called  
John." They said to her, "But no one in your  
family has that name", and made signs to  
his father to find out what he wanted him  
called. The father asked for a writing tablet  
and wrote, "His name is John." And they  
were all astonished. At that instant his power  
of speech returned and he spoke and praised  
God. All their neighbours were filled with  
awe and the whole affair was talked about  
throughout the hill country of Judaea. All  
those who heard of it treasured it in their  
hearts. "What will this child turn out to be?"  
they wondered. And indeed the hand of the  
Lord was with him. The child grew up and  
his spirit matured. And he lived out in the

wilderness until the day he appeared openly  
to Israel.

The Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.****PROFESSION OF FAITH**

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,

*(all bow during the next three lines)*

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 OVER THE OFFERINGS**

We place these offerings on your altar, O Lord,  
to celebrate with fitting honour the nativity of  
him  
who both foretold the coming of the world's  
Saviour  
and pointed him out when he came.  
Who lives and reigns for ever and ever.  
**Amen.**

**COMMUNION ANTIPHON**

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

**PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

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.  
**Amen.**

24TH JUNE 2018

# Sunday Message

THE NATIVITY OF ST JOHN THE BAPTIST

THE WORD

Year B • Season Colour: White • Psalter Week 4



## PREPARING THE WAY

(LK 1:57-66. 80)

*Elizabeth holding baby John the Baptist*

Elizabeth's joy shines through these images from Luke's Gospel. After receiving her tender visit from Mary, she herself pregnant with Jesus, Elizabeth shares in the joy of her neighbours and relations in giving birth to a son called John.

John's father, Zechariah, is a priest in the temple and as is customary in these situations, the son would usually follow in his father's footsteps, taking his father's name and preparing himself for life as a priest. However, something interesting happens. The child is not given his father's name and this leaves the neighbours and friends gathered at the circumcision ceremony with something to talk about. "What will this child turn out to be?" they wonder.

So it is clear that the path set out for John the Baptist will not follow the traditional cultural norm. He will turn his back on the temple worship of Jerusalem for it has been corrupted by King Herod, and once he has grown in wisdom and 'his spirit matures', he will live in the wilderness.

This great feast celebrates John's arrival in order to prepare the way for the Lord. The river Jordan as a symbolic place of liberation and exodus becomes John's place of ministry in baptising and freeing people of their sin and showing them a life in Christ. Yes, John indeed becomes a temple priest, but he points towards a new temple – a temple where people come to know the love and mercy of God. ■

## REFLECT

One of the beautiful images preceding today's Gospel story is when the infant Christ and the infant John first meet, and John dances for joy in Elizabeth's womb. It's a moment of grace with both infants destined for an arduous path in the years ahead. Taking a difficult path in life requires determination and a vast quantity of courage. You can picture the scene with John the Baptist as he ventures into the wilderness with humility and simplicity, in order that the world may come to know Jesus and share in his love and mercy. Some say he may have lived with monks near the Jordan but others state that he relied on the generosity of others for his food and accommodation. Whatever way we want to imagine it, his ministerial journey was not easy but in pointing to Jesus, he shows the world love.

Let us take a look at the decisions we must make to profess our faith in Christ. Those of us with young children preparing for the sacraments are almost acting counter-culturally in ensuring they understand the significance of baptism, communion and confirmation in their lives. We go to Mass on a Sunday but for some this is becoming less enticing, with dwindling numbers attending and liturgies struggling to provide adequate music and preaching. Prayer is becoming privatised and less about the community.

Today's feast explicitly points to the difficulties and obstacles that are constantly present to believers. We take courage from John the Baptist in his indomitable spirit and unwavering hope. We acknowledge that we too have to make decisions concerning our faith. Sometimes those decisions take courage and determination. ■

## SAY

**"One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all."**  
(Ephesians 4)

## DO

Reflect today on your own baptism and how it has impacted on your life.

## LEARN

"Holy Baptism is the basis of the whole Christian life, the gateway to life in the Spirit and the door which gives access to the other sacraments."

*(Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1213)*