

## The Nativity of Saint John the Baptist

Wednesday 24 June



### About the Nativity of Saint John the Baptist

This solemnity dates to the fourth century and celebrates four aspects about John the Baptist:

- the birth of the greatest of all the prophets
- the one who leapt for joy in his mother's womb, when Mary was pregnant and visited Elizabeth**
- the one who prepared the way for Christ and announced His presence and
- the one who baptized Jesus in the River Jordan.

### What can we learn from Saint John the Baptist's life?

John revealed Jesus to others as both the Messiah and the Lamb of God. He exemplifies the Christian life as one who proclaimed the Gospel message of healing and repentance and at the same time pointed Christ out and showed them the way to be united with God. John did not let his reputation or fame get to him, nor did he lord it over others. He knew his mission and his place and recognized that he must decrease and Jesus must increase (John 3:30). There are times in our life when things don't go the way we would like or the way we had planned. In those times, we must pray for the grace to be like Mary, let God's will be done, and trust in God to guide us along the different way he would like us to travel. COVID-19 has certainly shown us that we have to adapt. Overnight, many things we liked to do for entertainment came to a grinding halt. People lost their jobs and many things they had they planned (sometimes well in advance) went out the window. The people who are surviving this crisis best are those who have adapted and prayed, asking God for help, and used their time wisely to either learn new skills or lend a helping those who need it most. In this way, they have shown others God's presence and the way to follow His Son, Jesus.

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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.

Gospel Luke 1:57-66,80

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.

Meanwhile the child grew up and his spirit matured.

And he lived out in the wilderness until the day he appeared openly to Israel.

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## Antiphon

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

## Hymn for the Nativity of Saint John the Baptist

In the Temple, Zechariah  
met the angel Gabriel,  
who told him not to be fearful,  
for he had good news to tell.  
"Your wife will soon bear you a son,  
and his name is to be John."  
Zechariah made objections,  
and could not speak from then on.

Elizabeth welcomed Mary,  
who carried her child divine;  
and the child within her womb leapt  
for joy at this blessed time.  
"Of all women the most blessed,  
**God's Mother is here with me.**"  
Everything that God had promised  
very soon would come to be.

Three months later came the moment,  
Elizabeth's time had come.  
Eight days later was the naming,  
and his father was still dumb.  
"John is his name," was his answer,  
and he could speak once again.  
John grew up to preach and baptize,  
and announce God's coming reign.

87.87D Hymn to Joy

Text: Chris deSilva and Alessio Loiacono

## Music links to the Scripture Readings

[Every Valley](#) - Bob Dufford SJ

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