

ST JOHN'S THE BAPTIST DAY REFLECTION

24TH JUNE 2024

The biblical story of John, the son of Elizabeth and Zechariah, begins even before his birth. His leaping in his mother's womb is seen as a great alleluia in anticipation of the birth of his redeemer. In the four gospels, the good news of Jesus Christ is related as beginning with the emergence of John as the forerunner of Christ. He seemed to have some predestine role particularly in encouraging the people of God to live lives worthy of their calling and in imminent anticipation of the coming of the anointed one. In the tradition of the early Fathers, John was seen endowed with grace from before his birth, and consequently the Church has always kept the celebration of this day greater than that of his death.

Today we celebrate the birth of John the Baptist. It is only right that the birth of our Lord and St John the Baptist should be celebrated throughout the world because it is a profound mystery worthy of contemplation. A barren woman gave birth to John, a virgin conceived Christ; in Elizabeth, barrenness was overcome, in Blessed Mary, the way of human conception was changed. It was through knowing her husband that Elizabeth brought a son: Mary believed the angel and conceived the Messiah. Elizabeth conceived a child who was human being: Mary conceived a child who was both God and man.

Great then is John, and the Savior himself testified to John's greatness when he said that, "among those born of a woman there has arisen no man greater than John the Baptist". He excels all, each and every one of us. He is greater than the prophets, he is superior to the patriarchs. Everyone born of a woman is inferior to John, except the son of the virgin Mary who is greater still, as John said, "He who comes after me ranks before me, and I am not worthy to undo the strap of his sandal."

In the birth of our Lord's forerunner and in the birth of our redeemer there is this mystery:

The prophet's birth signifies our humility, but the lord's birth it is our ultimate exaltation. John was born as the days grow shorter while Christ was born as the days were growing longer in winter and it was fitting that

our status should grow smaller and the glory of God grow longer. John was sent ahead like a voice before a word, a lamp before the sun, a herald before the judge, a servant before his master.

Our calling is to be ahead of our Lord to bear witness to the Light of the world. We are the voice as announced by Isaiah: "A voice cries out in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord; make straight his paths. Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low and the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. So that all flesh shall see the salvation of our God."

John the Baptist points and directs people to God. His faithfulness to his calling cost him his life. Without fear because he was filled with Holy Spirit, He became the voice, the light, the forerunner making sure that the way of the lord is to prepared well.

Let us therefore step up and prepare a way for the Lord. First and foremost, in our Hearts and in our life so that the Lord will come into our hearts. Soften our lives and our hearts everyone and it is a decision you have to make and don't pretend as it is not that easy.

The passage of Revelation 3:20 reminds us that the Lord is knocking at the door of ones' heart. Whoever hears the voice will open the door for the Lord. He will come in to live and nourish us spiritually. Let us remove the barriers of sin by confession and repentance. This is John's message so that we turn away from sins and repent that we may have the Lord's favor and forgiveness.

We each know the crooked paths in our lives that we love strolling in, and it needs to be straightened up. Let us pave the way of true faith with good works. Let us rid ourselves of all arrogance and lift high our fainting hearts. Then when all is in order, smoothed and brought into harmony, we shall see the salvation of God as he is, for "his home is in peace and his dwelling in Zion."