

MORNING MEDITATION

The Nativity of Saint John the Baptist

Serenity is the art of accepting life with all its joys and sorrows.

Isaiah 49:1-6

Isaiah encountered disappointments and began to feel that he had wasted his time and had worked for nothing. He came out of this experience with renewed faith in his calling. He also gained new insights about his vocation which gave him strength. He had an intense experience of being called by God even before his birth, "from his mother's womb", to be a "servant" and much more....to be a light to the nations.....that salvation "may reach the ends of the earth".

Psalms 139

**O Lord, you have probed me, 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.**

Acts 13:22-26

In this excerpt, Luke tells us that Paul saw John the Baptist as the herald of Jesus. John proclaimed a baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel and prepared the people for welcoming the messiah, the newborn king of Israel, the savior of the world.

Luke 1:57-66; 80

Zechariah and Elizabeth were facing the tragedy of their life while they continued to fulfill their religious and social obligations. Zechariah was in the temple, waiting on God and God spoke to him and promised fulfillment of his hearts longings....He was going to have son.

God's voice comes to those who listen in faithfulness. Good news comes even when hope seems dead.

In Palestine, the birth of a boy was an occasion of great joy. When the time of birth was near, friends and neighbors gathered near the house. When the birth was announced, musician broke into music and song and great rejoicing, if it was a boy - and went away

sad if it was a girl. So, Elizabeth's house there was double rejoicing - she had a child in her old age and it was a boy. On the eighth day, the boy was circumcised and named. Girl could be named any time within thirty days after birth. Names were descriptive. John is shorter name for "Jehohannan", meaning, "God's Gift" – the sign of parents' gratitude for unexpected joy.

Even the neighbors wondered: "what will this child turn out to be!" Every child is a bundle of possibilities!

The coming of a child into a family is the greatest privilege because it is God's gift and the greatest responsibility because this gift carries unlimited potentialities that parents and educators must help actualize.

God has his own special name for you. He chose you before the foundation of the world, formed you in your mother's womb, knows and calls you by name right now.

Listen to him calling your name. Accept, Affirm and welcome the name He gives

Zechariah had a great vision for his son. He thought of his son as a prophet - a forerunner, who would prepare the way of the Lord. He broke into a beautiful song: "Benedictus" as it is known throughout history. Sing and pray and meditate the "Benedictus" today.

Saint of the day, June 24 - The Nativity of St. John the Baptist and other 34 are remembered this day.

The sole biblical account of the birth of John the Baptist comes from the Gospel of Luke, chapter 1. Luke tells us that the Angel Gabriel appeared to the priest Zechariah and announced that he and his wife Elizabeth would have a son and they were to name him John. Zachariah doubted the Angel's message because Elizabeth was beyond child-bearing age and was barren. Luke also tells us that Zachariah became mute because of his doubt.

Elizabeth did conceive and deliver a son and the neighbors and relatives "rejoiced" with her. The arrival of John the Baptist was a key moment in God's plan for the salvation of mankind through Jesus Christ. Eight days after the boy's birth, Elizabeth and Zechariah brought him to the temple for his circumcision in accordance with the Mosaic Law. During this time, it was customary to name the child after the name of his father, Zacharias. However, Elizabeth wanted him named "John" which surprised the relatives and neighbors because "John" was not a name used within the family line. When Zachariah was asked, he wrote on a writing tablet, "His name is John". At this, his "mouth was opened, and his tongue loosened, and he spoke, praising God." This again surprised the relatives and neighbors and they wondered "What kind of child will this be?"

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