

## **June 24, 2020 – Solemnity of the Nativity of St. John the Baptist**



**“May our gestures of teaching about ‘The Word, Jesus,’ inspired by St John the Baptist, reinforce hope and courage to those dying – in sin, in affliction, in depression, in loneliness!”  
( Is 49:1-6 Acts13:22-26 Lk 1:57-66, 80)**

**Wish you a Happy Feast of the Nativity of the “symbol of Hope” – St John the Baptist.**

### **1. ‘What will this child turn out to be?’**

John the Baptist is the only saint, after Jesus himself, whose birth the church celebrates with a solemn feast. We celebrate the birth of John the Baptist on June 24<sup>th</sup>, six months before we celebrate the birth of Jesus on December 25<sup>th</sup>. The celebration of the birth of Jesus at Christmas coincides more or less with the winter solstice. Just as the light of the sun begins to make a comeback after darkness has reached its peak, we celebrate the birth of the light of the world. The celebration of the birth of John the Baptist coincides, in contrast, with the summer solstice. Just as the light of the sun begins to decrease, after reaching its peak, we celebrate the birth of the one who said, Jesus ‘must increase, but I must decrease’.

The question of the neighbors and relations ask of the child John in the gospel reading, ‘What will this child turn out to be?’ could be asked of any of us. It is a question that could be asked of us at any stage of our lives, ‘What will I turn out to be?’, or to put the question in other terms, ‘Who is God calling me to be?’ ‘What is God’s purpose for my life?’ God’s purpose for John’s life and God’s purpose for all our lives have a great deal in common. God wants all of us to do what John did, to point out the Savior, to make way for Jesus, to lead others to Him by what we say and do. John the Baptist, whose birth we celebrate today, has something to teach us about how we might keep faithful to this God-given calling. He was a man of the desert, a man of prayer. We all need to find

our own desert place of prayer if we are to remain true to our calling to lead others to the Lord if we are to turn out as God wants us to.

## **2. The Feast of the Nativity of St John the Baptist comes with this great message of “hope”!**

The Gospel presents the beautiful incident of the birth and naming of St John the Baptist. The birth of John the Baptist is the pivot around which the history of our faith turns. He was the last prophet of the Old Covenant – and the first of the New Covenant. **One of the highlighting aspects of the birth of John the Baptist is the message that “hope is not to be lost, even in the midst of extreme barrenness!”**

The Gospel of St Luke says that “Elizabeth and Zechariah, both were advanced in years”, but they had no child; Elizabeth was barren” (Lk 1: 7). Elizabeth's barrenness was also symbolic of the barrenness of the land, of the world and the entire humanity. Wickedness had caused creation to be incapable of nurturing and sustaining life. Sin had rendered human beings infertile, to bear God's grace, and live in holiness. But God is the God of hope, the God of fulfilling every promise and the God of surprises!

From the barrenness of Elizabeth emerged the forerunner of the One who is Life! From the barrenness of the world, God gave rise to the Fountain of hope and trust! The entire life of St John – through the key events – is a spectacular reminder of this great virtue of “hope”...

### A. The conception of John

Even when there is barrenness all around, we need to “hope” in God who can work miracles and give us life and joy!

### B. The naming of John

Even when there are many worldly voices that seek to distract us from the ways that God wishes for us, we need to “hope” in God and follow whatever He wills, so as to find glory and joy in Him!

### C. The life of John in the desert

Even when life takes us through the deserts of emptiness, dangers, hardships, and misery, we need to “hope” in God who has a definite plan and purpose for our life!

### D. The beheading of John

Even when we become victims of cruelty, exploitation, wickedness, and inhumanness, we need to “hope” in God by living a life of truth, courage, convictions, and valor!

The Church celebrates the Nativity of only three persons, in her liturgical calendar.  
**Jesus -“Hope” Himself. Mother Mary – the Mother of “Hope” John the Baptist – the symbol of “Hope”**

May our lives become truly rooted in “hope” and become beacons of spreading this “hope and trust” to others. There are many who are sick in our world. There are many who are burnt by the fires of afflictions and at the point of death. There are many who have lost all faith in life and give themselves up to despair and dejection. Our gestures of teaching about “The Word – Jesus” can reinforce hope and courage to those dying – in sin, in affliction, in depression, in loneliness.

**May Jesus our “Hope” and Blessed Mamma, our “Mother of Hope” strengthen us!**

**Let us pray:**

Lord Jesus, you bring hope and salvation to a world lost in sin, despair, and suffering. Let your grace refresh and restore your people today in the hope and joy of your great victory over sin and death.

**Jesus, I Trust In You**