

The Nativity of St. John the Baptist

Cathedral of Saint Matthew – Houston, Texas

Jesus said in certain occasion that there had not been born anyone greater then John the Baptist!

And we know through Saint Luke that John the Baptist was visited by Jesus and was filled with the Holy Spirit even in Isabel's womb, his mother, when the Virgin Mary was pregnant with Jesus, she went to the mountains of Judea to visit her cousin Isabel! What an example of service that Mary gives us, knowing that Isabel was going to have a son in her old age!

The birth of John the Baptist was filled of marvelous signs and intervention from God the Father and the whole Trinity!

Isabel and Zachariah, the parents of John the Baptist, were visited by an angel of God in order to tell them that their prayers had been heard and that they would have a son, although they were very old, because all is possible for God, for Him there is nothing impossible!

John the Baptist had a devoted childhood near the Temple of Jerusalem where his father Zachariah was a priest of the Most High God!

John the Baptist had a youth full of prayer and austerity in the desert and along the Jordan River he began preaching like herald and precursor of the Messiah. He baptized in the river and called the people to do penance and to repent of their sins!

John the Baptist called each person and each social group to convert from the bad that they had done and to live according to the way of God!

When Jesus heard of John the Baptist, He exceedingly praised him like a just man, and one day walked in the Jordan River in order to allow Himself to be baptized by John! In that moment he heard the voice of the Father that said "This is my Son, the Beloved, Hear him!!! And the Holy Spirit descended over Him in the form of a dove!

Thousands of persons have gone to hear him and to be baptized. When John saw Jesus, he recognized him as the Messiah and filled with humility. He didn't want to baptize Jesus and well he said to his best disciples that Jesus was the Messiah, the Lamb of God that took the sins of the world!

And that day those that would be His apostles were with Jesus: John the evangelist and his brother Santiago, Peter, and Andrew!

John the Baptist publicly scolded Herod, the Roman imposed kinglet of Judea, because he committed adultery with Herodias, the wife of his brother Philip, and that bravery to call to repent and to scold that scandalous conduct, it would have cost him his life. When King Herod put him in jail, and because of an oath he made with Salome at a party, the daughter of Herodias, they cut off John's head and presented it to the adulterous monarch, on a tray of silver!

To end, what teaching did John the Baptist give us?

1. - His humility. He said that he was not worthy to untie the laces of Jesus' shoes!
2. - His testimony. His preaching prepared the way of the Lord in order to receive salvation from God in Jesus Christ!
3. - His life of prayer and penitence. It is so necessary in our Christian lives and more in the world of today!
4. - His confidence in God. As much as his parents Isabel and Zachariah trusted the Omnipotent one. They trusted against every hope and they did not fear the retaliation of the powerful.

Saint John the Baptist, pray for us!