

Reflection Thursday Week 12, Birthday of John the Baptist 2021

Saint John the Baptist has two feasts: in August to celebrate his death and in June to celebrate his birth, acknowledging what Christ said, *John was the greatest of the sons of men.*

He was a prophet from before his birth, leaping in the womb to announce the coming of the incarnate God. His task was to proclaim the fulfilment of all prophecies. This he did with unequalled courage. He unashamedly admitted that he, the greatest of all men, was the least in the kingdom of heaven. His disciples, and the devil, wanted him to build his own sect and oppose the one he himself had baptized and seize his place in history. But he did not. Now, he has his own glorious place in heaven.

I will make you the light of the nations, so that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth, writes Isaiah

Like Isaiah and John, we too were chosen before we were born and given all that we need to be a light to the nations that will enable others to welcome Christ into their lives and thus enter into salvation. John's birth reminds us that all births are miraculous gifts of God. That birth brings into the world someone unique, someone loved by God in a special way. In God's eyes no one birth is better than any other. Baptism reminds us that we share in the nature of Christ the prophet, Christ the King and the priesthood of Christ, each in our unique and distinctive way.

The quote above about John the Baptist is misleading like many quotes taken from scripture. The above quote is part of a sentence, the second part adds: *but the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.* The great lesson of John the Baptist is that he recognised we was an instrument of God and was happy to step back when the time was right. To be a light we, too, must allow Christ's light to shine in us and through us.

A small boy is sent to bed by his father.

Five minutes later, "Da-ad..."

"What?"

"I'm thirsty. Can you bring a drink of water?"

"No, you had your chance. Lights out."

Five minutes later: "Da-aaaad..."

"WHAT?"

"I'm THIRSTY. Can I have a drink of water?"

"I told you NO! If you ask again, I'll have to smack you!"

Five minutes later: "Daaaa-aaaad..."

"WHAT!"

"When you come in to smack me, can you bring a drink of water?"