

## Reflection Saturday Week 11 Nativity of John the Baptist 2023

Saint John the Baptist has two feasts. One, in August, celebrating his death, and one, in June, celebrating his birth. He is considered the greatest prophet but also the most tragic. 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 – and thus his own obsolescence. This he did with unequalled courage: he spread the news that he, the greatest of all men, was the least in the kingdom of heaven. His disciples, and the devil, would have preferred him to fight, to build his sect, to defeat this upstart whom he himself had baptized, to seize his place in history. But he did not – and so, rightly, he *has* his place, and he has glory in heaven. It is possible to envy the great and the talented and even think that they themselves are beyond envy. Encountering someone with greater gifts is always subject to envy. If ever you are faced with this kind of envy, pray for help and strength from John the Baptist.

### **Midsummer night, and bonfires on the hill**

burn for the man who makes way for the Light:

‘He must increase and I diminish still,  
until his sun illuminates my night.’

So, John the Baptist pioneers our path,  
unfolds the essence of the life of prayer,  
unlatches the last doorway into faith,  
and makes one inner space an everywhere.

Least of the new and greatest of the old,  
Orpheus on the threshold with his lyre,  
he sets himself aside, and cries “Behold  
the One who stands amongst you comes with fire!”

So, keep his fires burning through this night,  
beacons and gateways for the child of light. (Malcolm Guite)

**What do you call a woman throwing her utility bills in a fire?** Bernadette

**I have this bad feeling that I’m about to be fired from my graffiti removal job.** The writing is on the wall.

**American: I once had a job at a company that makes fire hydrants.** I had to quit. There was no place to park.