

Liturgy Alive of Solemnity of the Nativity of Saint John the Baptist

Greeting (See the First Reading of the Vigil)

Do not be afraid to speak, says the Lord,
for I am with you to protect you.
I am putting my words into your mouth.
Say whatever I command you.
May the Lord speak through us
and may be always with you.

Introduction by the Celebrant

In everyday life we often regret that we have not thought of the right words or have not had the courage to speak them. Today's feast of John the Baptist's birth is a reminder that in our Christian living we should have the courage to stand up and speak out for what is right. And like John, we too should show the way to Jesus and his Gospel by our convictions and the way we live. Let us pray in this Eucharist that the Lord may give courageous prophets like John the Baptist to the Church in our world and in our time.

(or:)

Introduction by the Celebrant (Weekdays)

As artists have pictured John the Baptist, there are two symbols that typify him very much. One is a mouth that shouts. It is the voice crying in the wilderness, calling people to conversion. It is a voice that could not be silenced, scolding the religious leaders, as well as the common folk, and urging people to change their ways. Without fear he even faces King Herod and tells him to stop his adultery. He paid dearly for it, for it will cost him his head. Then, he is the finger pointing to the coming Messiah, and here too he paid dearly, for his own disciples deserted him to follow Jesus. Still he went ahead: the one he announced must become greater, he John, only smaller. Yes, he was a great man. "The greatest prophet," says Jesus.

Penitential Act

Christ is still to be announced today.
Do we make him visible in our lives?
Are our ways leading to Christ?
Let us examine ourselves.

(PAUSE)

Lord, the world today and we too
are still in need of conversion.
But we lack the courage to change for the better.
Lord, have mercy. R/ Lord, have mercy.
Jesus Christ, we need to reflect
on our Christian vocation,
but we are afraid of the silence needed
to listen to your challenging Word:
Christ, have mercy. R/ Christ, have mercy.

Lord, we need prophets to speak in your name,
but we silence or ridicule them
when they point out our own inconsistencies:
Lord, have mercy. R/ Lord, have mercy.
Have mercy on us, Lord, convert us,
let us be people who prepare the way for you,
and when we have borne our witness,
help us to fade away to make room for you.
Lead us to everlasting life. R/ Amen.

Opening Prayer

Let us pray to God
that we may prepare the way of the Lord.

(PAUSE)

Merciful God,
we celebrate today with joy
the birth of John the Baptist,
your prophet who announced a new era
and prepared the way for your Son.
Help us to proclaim the message of Jesus
in the new language our time demands.
Give us the courage to leave our old ways
and to open resolutely to today's people
the new road to the future you offer us
in Jesus Christ, your Son and our Lord,
who lives with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.

Liturgy of the Word

First Reading Introduction: Servant Of The Lord

Like the Servant of God of this song from Isaiah, John the Baptist is loved and called by God even before he is born. His task as a servant will be to lead people to God.

Second Reading Introduction: John, The Humble Forerunner

John's task was to prepare people's hearts for the coming Savior and then humbly to fade away.

Gospel Introduction: What Will This Child Be?

His birth from old parents and the wonders before and after his birth all speak of John as a man chosen by God for a very special mission.

General Intercessions

Let us pray to God our Father, who has placed guides on our road to lead us to his home, and let us say: R/ Lord, lead us to you.

- For the Church of Jesus Christ, that the Spirit of Christ may inspire our leaders with prophetic zeal to lead our people to true Christian freedom, let us pray: R/ Lord, lead us to you.
- For those whose task is to guide, like missionaries, priests, sisters, educators in the faith, and leaders of nations, that in these often discouraging times they may continue hoping in God's strength, let us pray: R/ Lord, lead us to you.
- For those who do not yet know Christ, that there may be teachers and prophets who level for them the way to the Lord, let us pray: R/ Lord, lead us to you.
- For the world of today, that it may not turn a deaf ear to the voices of the prophets who plead for peace and justice for all, let us pray: R/ Lord, lead us to you.
- For all of us here, that Christ may not be among us as someone we do not know, but that he may become recognizable in the humility of our weakness and poverty, let us pray: R/ Lord, lead us to you. God, you know us as we are. You have formed and called us even before we were born. May we serve you in all humility and prepare the way for the coming of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. R/ Amen.

Prayer over the Gifts

Our God and Father,
 you gave to John the Baptist the eyes of faith
 needed to recognize and point out Jesus
 as the long-promised Savior.
 Help us to recognize your Son
 in these humble signs of bread and wine.
 May Jesus become greater in us
 and we smaller,
 that he may become visible in us
 and that in this way
 we may build roads that lead to you,
 our living God.
 We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Introduction to the Eucharistic Prayer

On John the Baptist's feast we remember how he pointed out to people the way to Jesus the Lord.
 Now we rejoice that Jesus our Lord is here with us, his people.

Introduction to the Lord's Prayer

We too have been chosen by the Father
 even before we were born.
 We pray to him the prayer of his children
 as given us by Jesus, his beloved Son:

Deliver Us

Deliver us Lord, from every evil
 and liberate us from our pride that keeps us
 from showing the true face of your Son.
 Make your Church attentive

to the voice of your Spirit
speaking through prophets in our day,
to the signs of the times
and to the needs and aspirations of people.
Help us to prepare with joy and hope
the full coming among us
of our Our and Savior Jesus Christ.
Invitation to Communion
This is Jesus, the Savior,
announced by John the Baptist
as the Lamb of God
who takes away the sin of the world.
Happy are we to be invited to the table of the Lord.

Prayer after Communion

Lord our God,
your Son has again been with us
and yet he is not fully recognizable
in our words and in our very being.
Change our hearts,
place on our lips words of faith and courage
and let our deeds speak without fear
the language of the Gospel of Jesus Christ,
your Son and our Lord for ever.

Blessing

Everyone of us was called by God,
even before we were born,
to be saved by Christ.
Everyone of us is called today
to prepare the way of the Lord
for the people we meet.
Everyone of us is called today
to point out the presence of Jesus, the Lord,
by the way we live his Gospel.
May God bless you for this task:
the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. R/ Amen.
Go in peace and God be with you
on the road to your fellowmen. R/ Thanks be to God.