

# Liturgy Alive of Nativity of John the Baptist

## NATIVITY of Saint JOHN, the Baptist

Solemnity

June 24

### A Finger and A Voice

#### 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 be always be with you. R/ And also with you.

#### Introduction by the Celebrant

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 still needs 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 that includes us –  
is 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 which 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. R/ Amen.

### **Liturgy of the Word**

#### **First Reading Introduction: Servant of the Lord**

Like the Servant of God in 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: 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 leading us 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, such as 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 deeper 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. **R/ Amen.**

### **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: R/ Our Father ...

### **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;  
make us attentive to the signs of the times  
and to the needs and aspirations of people.  
Help us to prepare with joy and hope  
for the full coming among us  
of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. **R/ For the kingdom ....**

### **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. R/ Lord, I am not worthy ....

### **Prayer after Communion**

Lord our God,  
your Son has been with us again  
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. R/ Amen.

### **Blessing**

Even before we were born  
every one of us has been called by God  
to be saved by Christ.  
Every one of us is called today  
to prepare the way of the Lord  
for the people we meet.  
Every one 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 bear witness  
to the Good News of the Lord. **R/ Thanks be to God.**