

Saint Study Podcast

Podcast # 115

- **Hello everyone and welcome to Saint Study Episode 115 – “St. John The Baptist”**
 - *Thank you for joining us – maybe we can all learn enough today that by the end of the program we will say, “I didn’t know that” (But now I do!)*
 - *What is a saint? A Canonized Saint is someone recognized by the Church as having led a life of great charity & heroic virtue. Their example of how to conquer any sin imaginable is so important that it was worth recognizing these men & women in a significant way. Anyone (canonized or not) whose soul was cleansed in Purgatory and now resides in Heaven is a Saint. It is every Christian’s goal to become a saint.*
- We always begin our learning by inviting the Holy Spirit to be with us...
 - *In the Name Of The Father, Son & Holy Spirit. Amen.*
 - *Dear Heavenly Father we ask you to be with us as we learn about the lives of your Saints. We ask that our minds be open and that you may fill us with the knowledge that was so loved by these men and women who lived lives of heroic virtue and great charity. Allow us to understand and emulate these Saints who we now know are in your company. In your name we pray, Amen.*
- **Let’s look at The Saint for this weeks study St. John the Baptist...**
 - The primary sources of information relating to the life and ministry of St. John the Baptist are the canonical Gospels.
 - St. Luke is the most complete, giving the circumstances accompanying the birth of St. John the Baptist and items on his ministry and death.
 - St. Mark & St. Matthew’s Gospels speak mainly of his Ministry and Adult life.
 - St. Johns Gospel adds a few more passages such as Acts 13:24; 19:1-6; but these are few and bear on the subject only indirectly.
 - St. John The Baptists Father – Zachary - a priest of the course of Abia, the eighth of the twenty-four courses into which the priests were divided (1 Chronicles 24:7-19);
 - Mother - Elizabeth, the Precursor's mother, "was of the daughters of Aaron", according to St. Luke (1:5) and cousin of Jesus’ Mother, Mary (Refer to Podcast #101)
 - He is frequently referred to as “The Precursor”
 - The birth of the Precursor was made known in a most remarkable way.

- Luke 1:6-17 (Read Aloud) –
 - In the days of Herod, King of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah of the priestly division of Abijah; his wife was from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. Both were righteous in the eyes of God, observing all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blamelessly. But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren and both were advanced in years. Once when he was serving as priest in his division's turn before God, according to the practice of the priestly service, he was chosen by lot to enter the sanctuary of the Lord to burn incense. Then, when the whole assembly of the people was praying outside at the hour of the incense offering, the angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing at the right of the altar of incense. Zechariah was troubled by what he saw, and fear came upon him. But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zechariah, because your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall name him John. And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, for he will be great in the sight of (the) Lord. He will drink neither wine nor strong drink. He will be filled with the Holy Spirit even from his mother's womb, and he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God. He will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah ⁷ to turn the hearts of fathers toward children and the disobedient to the understanding of the righteous, to prepare a people fit for the Lord."
- As Zachary was slow in believing this surprising prophecy, the angel, making himself known to him, announced that, in punishment of his incredulity, he should be stricken with dumbness until the promise was fulfilled. "And it came to pass, after the days of his office were accomplished, he departed to his own house. And after those days, Elizabeth his wife conceived, and hid herself five months" (Luke 1:23-24).
- During sixth month Mary came to visit Elizabeth after hearing she had conceived a child. Mary was aware how much her cousin had wanted a child.
- When the two cousins first met the unborn child in Elizabeth's womb leapt with joy.
- It was at this moment we think that the unborn child, John, was filled with the Holy Spirit and cleansed from the stain of original sin.
- On the 8th day after John's birth, as was tradition, he was to be named and circumcised.
- However the name of Zachary was not used...Elizabeth insisted on John as the Arch Angel Gabriel had told her. Even though Zachary could not speak, he wrote that their new son's name would indeed be John.
- This was unusual in Jewish tradition because children were named after another family member

- Once Zachary proclaimed his son's name to be John, his "mouth was opened and his tongue set free" – His speech was returned.
- John's actual date of birth is unknown. Gospel doesn't spell it out but it is generally thought to be about 6 months before Jesus.
- Of John's early life St. Luke informs us only that "the child grew, and was strengthened in spirit; and was in the deserts, until the day of his manifestation to Israel" (Luke 1:80).
- It is generally thought that 30 yrs. Passed until John returned as a prophet. "In the 15th year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar..."
- "The Precursor" did not appear as other men did. He wore a camel hair and leather girdle and was quite thin. His diet mainly consisted of wild honey and locusts.
- John had a strong character and even though his body was thin and not the symbol of some great physical presence, John preached that one should "Do penance: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matthew 3:2)
- Many were drawn to him. His words... "He that hath two coats, let him give to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do in like manner" (Luke 3:11).
- John advised them against
 - trusting in their national privileges
 - Faithfulness and honesty in the fulfillment of one's duties
 - The humble confession of one's sins.
 - Some were publicans; (Roman tax collectors) on them he enjoined not to demand more than the rate of taxes set by law (Luke 3:13).
 - To the soldiers he recommended not to do violence to any man, nor falsely to denounce anyone, and to be content with their pay (Luke 3:14).
- John begins to Baptize his followers
 - "saying that baptism was good, not so much to free one from certain sins as to purify the body, the soul being already cleansed from its defilements by justice"
 - When John began baptizing the people it drew much attention.
 - This was when he became know as John The Baptist
 - Many were against this practice and used scripture as reasons why they were against it. (Ezekiel, Zechariah, Etc)
 - Some Wondered aloud if John was the Messiah (Luke 3: 15)

- (Luke 3:16, 17) "I indeed baptize you with water; but there shall come one mightier than I, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to loose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire: whose fan is in his hand and he will purge his floor; and will gather the wheat into his barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire"
- Eventually Jesus traveled from Galilee to Jordan to be baptized by John.
 - (Matthew 3:15-17) Gives account of the Baptism of Jesus.
 - At first John was confused why Jesus would need baptized as "He who did no sin" would come to John seeking "baptism of penance for the remission of sins" (John knows the Messiah is sinless)
 - John moments later came to have perfect knowledge about baptizing Jesus and complied fully. (Divine inspiration)
 - "After Jesus was baptized He came up from the water and behold, the heavens were opened for him . . . And, He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming upon Him. And a voice from heaven, saying: This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased"
 - This marked the beginning of Jesus' ministry. (CCC 536-537)
 - At this baptism of Jesus, He formally turns his life over to God and submits himself to be "numbered" among the sinners.
 - Jesus has reopened to door to heaven that the sins of Adam had caused to close.
- John continued to evangelize and Jewish priest's and Levites approached him to find out if he was the Messiah.
- John told them he was not the Christ. He said: "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Isaiah" (John 1:19-28).
- Remember back to the program on St. Andrew...Andrew was a follower of John. There came a day again when Jesus was close by and looking at Him John said, "Behold, The Lamb of God."
- Andrew immediately understood that John was not the Messiah but the one who would lead him to the Messiah.
- John Gets Arrested
 - Christ had left to preach in Galilee & John continued preaching in the Jordan valley.
 - Herod liked to hear St. John speak but Herod was Fearful of St. John's great power with the people.

- But Herod had him arrested and imprisoned at Machaerus Fortress on the Dead Sea when John denounced his adulterous and incestuous marriage with Herodias, wife of his half brother Philip.
 - Death Of St. John The Baptist
 - Herodias hated St. John so intensely that she wished him dead for what he had said about her relationship with Herod, but did not know a way to kill him.
 - John was beheaded at the request of Salome, daughter of Herodias, who asked for his head at the instigation of her mother.
 - Herod offered Salome anything she wanted because he was so pleased by her dancing at his birthday celebration.
 - (Mark 6:21-28) Ask of me what thou wilt, and I will give it thee. . .Who when she was gone out, said to her mother, what shall I ask? But she said: The head of John the Baptist. And when she was come in immediately with haste to the king, she asked, saying: I will that forthwith thou give me in a dish, the head of John the Baptist. And the king was struck sad. Yet because of his oath, and because of them that were with him at table, he would not displease her: but sending an executioner, he commanded that his head should be brought in a dish: and gave it to the damsel, and the damsel gave it to her mother"
 - Saint Jerome says Herodias kept the head for a long time after, occasionally stabbing the tongue with his dagger because of what John had said in life.
 - St. John The Baptist' Feast Day is August 29th.
- Patronage

- **is the patron saint for**

Against Convulsions	Against Epilepsy	Against Hail
Against Hailstorms	Against Spasms	Baptism
Bird Dealers	Converts	Convulsive Children
Cutters	Epileptics	Farriers
French Canadians	Jordan	Knights Hospitaller
Knights Of Malta	Lambs	Macau, China
Maltese Knights	Monastic Life	Motorways
Printers	Tailors	

- Conclusions – Interesting notes about their life or sainthood
 - Angel Gabriel told Zachary about how his unborn son John would be filled with the holy spirit from inside the womb...remember when Mary visits Elizabeth...
 - Remember the 2nd Joyful mystery of the Holy Rosary...”The Visitation”
 - A Key event in Christian history
 - Interesting that in naming John as an infant that it shows us that we don’t always have to do things the way we always did it...Is this something that God is doing to show the Jews that it’s OK to change as long as it is recognized as God’s will?
 - John as a prophet also reveals himself not as other men look. Some think he’s the devil? His attire and diet are so unusual. Is there a lesson here?
- Preview of next episode
 - **Episode #116 – St. Joseph – Husband of Mary**
- Primary References, Plugs & Web Sites
 - www.newadvent.org – Online Catholic Encyclopedia
 - www.ewtn.com – Best reference site
 - <http://www.usccb.org> The US Conference of Catholic Bishops
 - New American Bible
 - Catechism of the Catholic Church (C.C.C.)
 - Follow/Subscribe to SaintStudy on Itunes, Facebook and Twitter –
 - **Keep in mind...SaintStudy is meant to teach you a little bit about the Saints but also reveal how simple it is to find out truths about the Catholic Faith.**

Thanks for Joining Us!

**May The Peace of our Lord
Be always with you...Have a good day!**