

## Nativity of St. John the Baptist 2018

My beloved brothers and sisters, I really like watching track and field events, although, I often thank God that He did not create me to be a runner; nonetheless, I really enjoy watching these athletes. One of my favorite events is the relay race, in which one runner hands off a baton to another runner, and so on, down the track. St. John the Baptist received the baton of the Gospel from the prophets who came before him, who were chosen by God to announce His plan of salvation and give His people hope. St. John in turn, handed on the baton to Jesus' first disciples, who then took it, washed it in Christ's blood, and then handed it on to their disciples, and they have handed it on to us!

Two thousand years after God made His covenant with Abraham, God sent John to announce the fulfillment of His covenant in Jesus Christ His Son. God continued to unfold His covenant throughout the time of the Old Testament, and finally sent John, the precursor, to set the stage for the Messiah. The birth of John the Baptist is so important, that it is celebrated on a Sunday in place of the regular Sunday Mass, because his birth is the floodlight that illuminates the stage wherein the final drama of our salvation takes place.

The story of St. John the Baptist reminds us that God has never forgotten us, and, He will never forget us, despite the struggles and stress of our lives! St. John's story reminds us that God is active in our lives, and He is active in the world, even when evil is so manifest, His good will triumph. He reminds us that God is ever interested in our lives and active in our lives for our good, and He cares about sinners and wants to save us. St. John's story reminds us that God has called each of us by name and has a plan for us from the time we were conceived in our mother's wombs. He knows us by name and He calls us by name and indeed, named us while we were being knit together in the womb. He has a unique and special plan for each of us, and has called us to take up the baton, and be prepared to hand it off to others. God is active in the world and in our lives: we must ask ourselves: what do I think God's plans are for my life, my family, and my course in the world?