

## **Nativity of St. John the Baptist - June 24**

In John the Baptist we behold a perfect vessel of sanctification, made fit for the Master's use by the Holy Spirit, while still in his mother's womb. He was born with a predestined mission and he fulfilled that mission perfectly. In the discharge of his prophetic office, as herald of the Messiah, he did not hesitate to rebuke Herod, the King, telling him that it was unlawful for him to have Herodias, his brother Philip's wife. The infuriated woman, in revenge, through the solicitation of her daughter, who danced before Herod, obtained the head of John the Baptist, for the King at her request sent soldiers to the prison where John had been incarcerated, and decapitated the prophet of God. Thus, he was found faithful unto death.

My friends, in addressing you, I am addressing for the most part the regenerate, those who have been re-born of the Spirit in holy Baptism, and upon us, to some extent rests the mantle of John the Baptist, as upon John the Baptist rested the mantle of Elias. But are you realizing your vocation and are you proving yourself faithful to it unto death?

When, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, the Apostles first preached the Gospel, some unbelievers in the crowd, mocking, said: "These men are full of new wine." [Acts.2:13] But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice and spoke to them:

Men of Judea, and all you that dwell in Jerusalem, be this known to you and listen to my words. For these are not drunk, as you suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day. But this is that which was spoken of by the prophet Joel:

And it shall come to pass in the last days, (says the Lord), I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams. And upon my servants indeed, and upon my handmaids will I pour out in those days my Spirit, and they shall prophesy. [Acts. 2:14-18 and Joel 2:28-29]

In those marvelous first days of the Christian era, commonly called the "Pentecostal Age," it was not only the Apostles and the priests who were missionaries, but every man, woman and child who professed Christ and was incorporated into his Mystical Body in Baptism was a missionary, and it ought to be so in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Every one of you, my brethren, should be a missionary to prepare the way for the second coming of Christ by preaching the Gospel to every creature throughout the whole world, that all flesh may see the salvation of God, even those who – a thousand million of them – still sit in darkness and in the shadow of death.[Lk.1:79] Realize, my brethren, your vocation! You are called by God to be missionaries and if you cannot go

in person to labor as so many thousands of missionaries are laboring in the field afar, at least join the commissary department of the Great Missionary Army and provide food and equipment for the missionaries--everything that they need to carry on the work of evangelization, such, for example, as schools, churches, hospitals and nurseries, wasting nothing but using all your talent, substance and opportunity to the greater glory of God, the good of your neighbor and the salvation of souls! (Fr. Paul's Radio Talk, Dec. 20, 1936)