

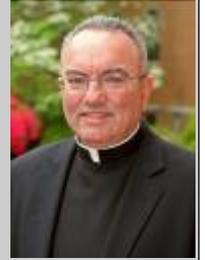
From the Pastor's Desk

The Feast of St. John the Baptist

It's unusual that this Sunday falls on the Feast of the St John the Baptist.

In Luke's gospel we hear:

*What, then, will this child be?
For surely the hand of the Lord was with him.
The child grew and became strong in spirit,
and he was in the desert until the day
of his manifestation to Israel.*



From the very gospel, the Birth of St John the Baptist is marked with the unusual circumstances that his name is proclaimed by his father Zechariah as John. It is only Our Lord and the Blessed Mother's births that are celebrated on the Liturgical Calendar each year. This particular passage from St Luke's Gospel points to the special role that John the Baptist plays.

It is the role of the Precursor, the "Voice in the Wilderness, the One who prepares the Way of the Lord." There are many similarities with the cousins Elizabeth and Mary. The gospel focuses on the fact that nothing is impossible for God. Today we celebrate this great feast which reminds us of the power and providence of God. Let us celebrate this day which highlights the importance of our preparation to receive Jesus Christ the Savior with great love.

Parish Pilgrimage to Marian Shrines of Spain and Portugal

First let me say that a Pilgrimage is not just a vacation or tour, it is a religious journey which hopefully will bring one closer through the saints to Our Lord!

On September 30, we are planning a 10-day pilgrimage to the Marian Shrines of Spain and Portugal. It's a wonderful trip that includes Masses being celebrated each day and the opportunity to visit the various shrines that will bring you closer to Our Lord through Mary.

Highlights of the trip will be visiting both the very popular sites of the Apparitions of Our Blessed Mother at Fatima, Portugal and Lourdes, France. We celebrate the Appearances of Our Lady to the three children at Fatima that occurred over 100 years ago. One of the highlights there will be the celebration of Mass at the Chapel of Apparitions.

At Lourdes there is the opportunity to visit the Marian shrine where Mary appeared to the peasant girl, Bernadette. WE will celebrate Mass at the Grotto of Our Lady.

One of the exciting visits during the pilgrimage includes visiting a very ancient site which is not as well known, but equally rewarding: The Marian shrine at Montserrat. It is at Montserrat in the mountains above Barcelona that one finds the "Black Madonna" a beautiful Shrine to Our Lady in the Catalan region of Spain. In this Monastery shrine, there is a beautiful monastic choir which prays publicly each day.

There are many other aspects of this religious pilgrimage including visiting the convent of St Theresa of Avila, as well as the beautiful walled city of Avila, just to name one other great pilgrimage site. If you are interested, please take a Pilgrimage Brochure at the back of the Church and call the Parish Office to let me know that you would like to join our group. It promises to be an exciting and spiritually rewarding journey!

With Prayers,
Father Ed