

BIRTH OF SAINT JOHN THE BAPTIST (B)

1st. READING (Is 49, 1-6)

Listen to me, O islands, pay attention, peoples from distant lands. Yahweh called me from my mother's womb; he pronounced my name before I was born. He made my mouth like a sharpened sword. He hid me in the shadow of his hand. He made me into a polished arrow set apart in his quiver. He said to me, "You are Israel, my servant, Through you I will be known." "I have laboured in vain," I thought and spent my strength for nothing." Yet what is due me was in the hand of Yahweh, and my reward was with my God. I am important in the sight of Yahweh, and my God is my strength. And now Yahweh has spoken, he who formed me in the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob back to him, to gather Israel to him. He said: "It is not enough that you be my servant, to restore the tribes of Jacob, to bring back the remnant of Israel. I will make you the light of the nations, that my salvation will reach to the ends of the earth."

RESPONSORIAL PSALM (Ps 138)

O Lord, you search me and you know me,
You know my resting and my rising,
You discern my purpose from afar.
You mark when I walk or lie down,
All my ways lie open to you.

For it was you who created my being,
Knit me together in my mother's womb.
I thank you for the wonder of my being,
For the wonders of all your creation.

Already you knew my soul,
My body held no secret from you
When I was being fashioned in secret
And moulded in the depths of the earth.

2nd. READING (Acts 13, 22-26)

Paul said: God made David the king of our ancestors, of whom he approved in these words: I have selected David the son of Jesse, a man after my own heart, who will do all I want him to do. It is from the descendants of David that God has now raised up the promised saviour of Israel, Jesus. Before he appeared, John proclaimed a baptism of repentance for all the people of Israel. As John was ending his life's work, he said: 'I am not what you think I am, for after me another one is coming whose sandal I am not worthy to untie.' Brothers, children and descendants of Abraham, and you also who fear God, it is to you that this message of salvation has been sent.

GOSPEL (Luke 1, 57-66.80)

When the time came for Elizabeth, she gave birth to a son. Her neighbours and relatives heard that the merciful Lord had done a wonderful thing for her and they rejoiced with her. When on the eighth day they came to attend the circumcision of the child, they wanted to name him Zechariah after his father. But his mother said, "Not so; he shall be called John." They said to her, "No one in your family has that name"; and they asked the father by means of signs for the name he wanted to give. Zechariah asked for a writing tablet and wrote on it, "His name is John," and they were very surprised. Immediately Zechariah could speak again and his first words were in praise of God. A holy fear came on all in the neighbourhood, and throughout the Hills of Judea the people talked about these events. All who heard of it pondered in their minds and wondered, "What will this child be?" For they understood that the hand of the Lord was with him. The child grew up and his spirit matured. And he lived out in the wilderness until the day he appeared openly to Israel.