

SOLEMNITY OF THE NATIVITY OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

June 24, 2007

Is 49:1-6; Acts 13:22-26; Lk 1:57-66, 80

Homilist: *S. Mary Agnes Lanthier, OP*

I wish that I had these words of the prophet Jeremiah on my lips when, at age twenty-three, I attempted to give a reflection on the humility of St. John the Baptist to my second-graders: “ ***O Lord God, I know not how to speak. I am too young!***”

It was my first year teaching; about the first month of school, and a feast of John the Baptist—a perfect opportunity to inform my class of the humility of St. John. Fresh from college at the Motherhouse, I gave them all I knew about St. John’s humility. There was silence, and then a hand went up.. Pleased that my words had sparked some interest, I said,

“Yes, Patty,?” .

“Sister, What is ‘u milty? Bong!

My prayer today? : “***O Lord God, I know not how to speak. I am too old!***”

John could identify himself with both prophets What were his thoughts when he read in Isaiah: “ ***The Lord called me from birth. From my mother’s womb, he gave me my name.***”

How comforting must have been the words of Jeremiah and Isaiah to John the Baptist when he left the desert to preach a baptism of penance while announcing that the long awaited Messiah was in the midst of his fellow Israelites. Many of the Scribes and Pharisees did not accept John’s teaching, and there must have been times when, like the prophet Isaiah, he felt that he, too, “ ***toiled in vain and for nothing uselessly spent his strength.***”

Yet he surely cherished the words of the prophet Isaiah,: “ ***Yet my reward is with the Lord, my recompense is with my God.***”

In our quest for understanding God’s loving care for us from our mother’s, womb to the present, his providing all we need as preachers –in whatever form is ours-- may we be ever grateful as we strive to spread His Word. . . .

We have had, or will have dark moments of discouragement as we search in vain for the goal, the objectives, the right word and correct meaning of our homilies, and especially of the homily of our life.. May we ever keep in mind the words of Isaiah:

***Yet my reward is with the Lord,
my recompense is with my God ...
And my God is now my strength!.***