

Kids' Chronicle

Jesus praises John the Baptist

By JOE SARNICOLA

Jesus was sitting in a quiet place with his disciples, encouraging them to preach the same way he had.

"Whoever extends hospitality to you, as my disciples, is welcoming me into their home as well," he said. "Because of this they will receive the same blessings that will be yours for your faithfulness to me. Not even an offer of a drink of water to one of you who is thirsty will go unnoticed by my father. The men and women who care for your needs will receive their reward."

Jesus then instructed his friends to follow him into one of the nearby towns to preach to the people there. When Jesus chose a hill just outside of the town gate that would serve as a place for him to talk to the people, he sent his disciples into the town to invite the people to hear him. Upon learning that Jesus was with them, many of the people brought their sick family members to be healed. Still others sat or stood nearby just to hear Jesus preach.

Several men in the crowd were friends of John the Baptist. John was in prison because of his preaching, but he had heard about some of the things Jesus was doing.

One of John's friends stood up and asked Jesus, "Are you the Messiah that John preaches will come, or should we still be waiting for someone else?"

"Give this answer to John," Jesus said. "You have seen with your own eyes the sick being healed, the deaf made to hear, the lame made to walk, the good news preached. Those are happiest who do not have any doubts about who I am."

As John's friends left to deliver the message Jesus gave them, Jesus used the example of John as a lesson for the people.

"When you saw John in the desert or the hills, what did you think he would



Illustration by Amy Sundstrom

look like?" Jesus asked "Did you think he would be wearing fine robes? Did you think he was a prophet?"

The people talked among themselves. Some had seen and heard John the Baptist, some had only heard what others had said.

"John is a prophet and more," Jesus continued. "He is the messenger written about in the Scriptures. He is a great man, but the least in the kingdom of heaven is even greater."

"Tell us more of the kingdom of heaven," one of the town elders asked.

"What I say can only be understood by those to whom I reveal it," Jesus said. "But this I say to all of you. If you are weary from the stress and worries of your daily lives, come to me. Learn from my humility and your spirits will be given rest."

Q&A

READ MORE ABOUT IT: Matthew 11

- Q: 1. Who sent men to find out about Jesus?
- 2. Who did Jesus say would be happy people?

Bible Accent

When King Herod learned that a child had been born in Israel whom the wise men called the King of the Jews, he became very angry and jealous. He ordered his soldiers to kill every baby boy in Bethlehem under the age of two. Based on the population size of the small city at the time of Christ, experts estimate as many as twenty-five babies were taken from their families and killed as a result of Herod's order.



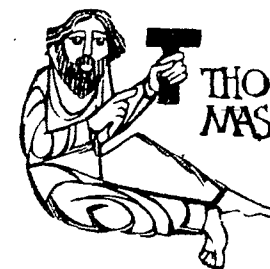
The church has not forgotten this tragedy. December 28 has been set aside as a day in honor of those slain. This day is referred to as the feast of the Innocents, the feast of the Holy Innocents, or Childermas Day. The Roman Catholic church has recognized this day since the turn of the sixth century. Some churches of other faiths also have a day to honor these children.

Let us each spend a few moments in silent prayer on that day this year as a sign of our own sorrow and sympathy.

Saint Thomas

Thomas, one of the first apostles of Jesus, is most remembered for being the man who doubted that Jesus had risen from the dead. Jesus showed the wounds he received at his crucifixion to Thomas, and Thomas believed from that point on.

But there is a legend about Thomas that is not as well known.



Thomas was commissioned by a prince to build a luxurious palace. The prince gave Thomas money for materials and workers, and left to visit the princes and

kings of other countries. Instead of building a palace, Thomas used the money to feed and clothe the poor and to care for the sick and needy.

When the prince returned and found out, he threw Thomas in prison. Then the prince's brother died and appeared to the prince in a dream.

"Brother, listen as you sleep," the brother said. "By his generous acts on earth, this Thomas you have imprisoned has built a beautiful palace here in heaven for me to live in. Such a place could not be built with wealth."

The prince woke up and immediately freed Thomas.

Because of this story, Thomas is the patron saint of masons. We honor him on December 21.

Puzzle

Use the Gospel according to Luke, chapters 1 and 2, to answer the following questions.

Answers on page 4.

1. Who was the mother of John the Baptist?
2. Who said, "My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord?"
3. Which Emperor wanted a census taken?
4. Which city did Joseph have to go to?
5. What did the shepherds see in the sky?
6. On which Jewish holiday did Jesus speak in the temple?

KID'S CLUB

You can win a \$50 savings bond by writing an essay (100 or fewer words) answering this question:

Who in your family do you consider an example of a good Christian, and why?

Send your essay — including name, home address, telephone number, school and grade — to **Catholic Courier, 1150 Buffalo Road, Rochester, N.Y. 14624**. Deadline for entries is Dec. 28, 1995. The winner will be notified by phone and receive the savings bond by mail. In addition, the winner's essay will be published in an upcoming issue of *Kids' Chronicle*.

Last month's winner was **Joshua DiLallo**, a sixth-grade student at A.J. Smith Elementary School in Union Springs. In response to the question, **What are some of your family traditions for celebrating Advent**, he wrote:

For the last five years we have celebrated Advent by decorating a giving tree at our church with hearts and angel wings. My other two brothers help by gathering the food that the people bring to our church for the needy and we sort them out, box it and deliver it to needy families along with gifts that the people of St. Hyacinth buy from the giving tree. Each Sunday we also light a candle from the Advent Wreath, we each take turns saying a prayer and then we have a family dinner. We also decorate the house.

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