

# Kids' Chronicle

## The voice in the wilderness

BY JOE SARNICOLA

Tiberius had been emperor of Rome for 15 years when the man named John first started calling out, "Repent and be baptized!"

Tiberius was not loved by his people and he lived a life of self-indulgence, using the riches of Rome to satisfy his own desire for pleasure and drunkenness. Tiberius had his own image inscribed on Roman coins.

Tiberius appointed a man named Pontius Pilate as governor of the Roman territory of Judea. Pilate's word was law. If he decreed a man should die for any crimes he may have committed, that man would indeed be killed. Likewise, he was able to free a man from prison or lift a death sentence, if he chose to do so. In order for the death penalty to be imposed by the Sanhedrin, the Jewish governing body, the governor's agreement must first be received.

*Pax Romana*, the Peace of the Romans, was a time when there was no war in Israel. But there was the constant presence of the Roman soldiers. The Israelites had known slavery, isolation and exile since ancient times. They waited for the promised messiah, he who was written about who would be "wonderful counselor, a prince of peace."

The prophet Isaiah foretold that, prior to the coming of the messiah, there would be "a voice that cried out in the wilderness." The people waited for that voice as well.

Zechariah was one such man who watched and waited. He was a faithful man, a priest sincere in his devotion to God — as was his wife, Elizabeth. One day Zechariah was praying in the temple when an angel appeared before him. Zechariah dropped to his knees in fear.

"Do not be afraid," the angel said. "God is going to bless your childless marriage with a son."

And after a period of time, a son was



born to Zechariah and Elizabeth. His name was John. When he grew into a strong man he spent time in the desert living on fruits and honey. While he was there, the Lord was with him and sent him out with a message.

"Prepare the way of the Lord!" John would declare.

"And who are you to say this?" people would ask.

John's reply would always be the same: "I am a voice crying out in the wilderness."

Read more about it:

Luke 3

### Q&A

1. What country had its soldiers in Israel?
2. Who did John say he was?



### Bible Accent

Baptism is one of the Sacraments of Initiation into the church, the other two being Eucharist and confirmation.

The first mention in the Bible of baptism in water is with the ministry of John, often called "the Baptist" or "the Baptizer." The word "baptism" comes from the Greek word "to plunge into" or "be immersed in water."

According to the Catechism of the Catholic Church, baptism represents a change from the death of sinfulness into the resurrection of Jesus. Because of baptism we are able to enter the Kingdom of God. After Pentecost, the Apostles baptized new Christians into the faith. Our priests today celebrate this important sacrament.

### St. Cecilia

Although St. Cecilia's exact date of birth is unknown, she is believed to have been raised in a Christian household in second- or third-century Rome. She married Valerian, a Roman official who was not a Christian. She told her husband that God would bless them both if he was baptized and converted to Christianity. He agreed and became Cecilia's first convert. Valerian's brother also was baptized.

The two men were very supportive of the Christians who lived in Rome, but they were killed by the Roman prefect for refusing to denounce their Christianity. Cecilia, too, was sentenced to death.

St. Cecilia is the patron saint of music and musicians. We honor her on November 22.

## Puzzle

Answers on page 2.

Unscramble to following sentence to learn one of Paul's teachings.

ebseuca fo rou mbasipt ew ear  
leab ot evli a wen flie.

(paraphrase of Romans 6:3)

### Bible Trivia

Can you name all seven sacraments?

Send Answer to: *Catholic Courier Bible Trivia*, P.O. Box 24379, Rochester, N.Y. 14624. Please include your name, address and school name.

All entries must be received by Dec. 11, 1997. A winner will be selected at random from all the correct entries submitted.

Last month's winner was **Rebecca Wilkie**, a second-grade student at St. Francis DeSales/St. Stephen School, Geneva. She correctly identified Saint Peter as the saint recognized as being the first pope.

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