

Kids' Chronicle

'... and you shall name him John'

BY JOE SARNICOLA

Zechariah was a priest and a good man in the eyes of God. He and his wife, Elizabeth, followed all of God's laws with willing hearts. They had no children, but they had always wanted at least one child. One day, when Zechariah was burning incense in the sanctuary, an angel appeared next to him.

"Do not be afraid, Zechariah," the angel said, "because your prayer has been heard. Your wife, Elizabeth, will bear you a son, and you shall name him John. And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth. He will be filled with the Holy Spirit even from his mother's womb, and he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God."

"How shall I know this?" asked Zechariah. "For I am an old man, and my wife is advanced in years."

Then the angel, whose name was Gabriel, said, "I was sent to speak to you and to announce this good news. But now you will be speechless and unable to talk until the day these things take place, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled at their proper time." Zechariah left the temple and everyone knew he had seen a vision.

When a son was born to Elizabeth and Zechariah, friends, neighbors, and relatives came to rejoice with them. Everyone suggested that they name the boy Zechariah, after his father, but Elizabeth said, "No. He will be called John."

One of the people there said, "There is no one among your relatives who has this name." So the people looked to



Illustration by Linda Jeanne Rivers

Zechariah, who had been unable to speak for many months.

He wrote down on a tablet, "John is his name." As soon as he had written this announcement, his speech was restored, and he rejoiced and praised God for all the blessings he had received. "Blessed be the Lord, God of Israel, for he has visited and brought redemption to his people." Then Zechariah touched the head of his son and said, "And you, child, will be called prophet of the Most High, for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways."

Zechariah and his friends and relatives knew that this boy would be special

because the hand of the Lord was with him. John grew and became strong in spirit and spent most of his life in the desert until the time he was manifested to Israel.

READ MORE ABOUT IT:
Luke 1

Q&A

1. Why was Zechariah unable to speak?
2. What did Zechariah write on the tablet?

Puzzle

Spell out five books of the New Testament

using only the letters of the phrase

"... many will rejoice at his birth."

Answers on page 9.

JUNE SPECIALS LUNCH

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Kids' Club

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

John became a baptizer when he grew up.

Why is baptism so important to our faith?

Send your essay — including name, home address, telephone number, school and grade — to *Catholic Courier*, P.O. Box 24379, Rochester, NY 14624. Deadline for entries is June 21, 2001. 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 Tim Young, a second-grader at St. Pius Tenth School, Chili. In answer to "Jesus told us how much God loves us. How can we show that we love God in return?" he wrote, "I can show God how much I love Him by helping others. By giving people their medicine. I can help people across the street. Help people on a problem. Help kids ride a bike. I can help them ice skate. I can help them with art. I can help a baby walk."

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Bible Accent

Each of the four Gospels contains an account of the ministry of John the Baptist. John told people he was the "voice of one crying out in the desert," as foretold by Isaiah, the Old Testament prophet. John usually wore a camel skin and a leather belt, and he ate locusts and wild honey. He preached that people should repent of their sins, but he always said that there would be someone who would appear after him who was greater than he, someone who would not baptize with water, as he did, but with the Holy Spirit. That someone, of course, was Jesus. When Jesus came to John in order to be baptized by him, John did not want to do it. He felt unworthy to baptize Jesus. But Jesus persuaded John to baptize him, and the Spirit, in the form of a dove, landed on the head of Jesus. John was later killed by King Herod.

St. Anthony Gianelli

Anthony Gianelli was born in Genoa, Italy, in 1789. As a young man in a middle class family, his kindness, industriousness and high intellect were evident to everyone with whom he had contact. A wealthy woman wanted to help him acquire the best education possible, so she helped to pay for his schooling which eventually led him to the ecclesiastical seminary in Genoa. He excelled as a student and was allowed to preach while he was only a subdeacon. His gifts for preaching attracted so many people, Anthony was granted a special dispensation to be ordained a priest before he had reached the required age. Over the course of his life, in addition to his regular priestly duties, Anthony organized two religious congregations, the Missioners of St. Alphonsus Liguori for priests, and one for women dedicated to Santa Maria dell'Orto (of the garden). Anthony became a bishop in 1838. We remember him on June 7.