

Jesus Is Baptized by St. John

A few months before Jesus Christ was born in Bethlehem, another boy was born in the same country. His name was John, and his mother Elizabeth was a cousin of the Virgin Mary. Even before John was born, an angel appeared to John's father telling him that God planned to use his son in a special way.

When John was still a very young boy, he went to the other side of the river Jordan. There he lived in the wilderness, which was a wide, empty stretch of land, nothing more than rocks and sand. John lived there all by himself. He wore the roughest and simplest kind of clothes and ate only the little food that he was able to gather in the wilderness. There he lived and prayed and listened to God's voice.

One day, when John was grown up, he knew that the time had come for him to begin his work. He left the wilderness and went along the river Jordan speaking God's message to the people who lived there. Crowds of people came to see and listen to him. He told them how they must prepare for the coming of Jesus Christ, the Savior who was promised for many years.

When people asked John what they should do, he told them they must be sorry for all the bad things they had done. They must learn to share things with others. They must be honest, kind, and helpful to others. To show that they were really sorry and that they wanted to live a good, clean life, the people entered into the river Jordan and bathed in its waters. John prayed that their hearts and souls might be made clean. This was called Baptism.

Some of the people who came to be baptized by John thought that he was the promised Savior. John told these people: "I baptize you with water, but there comes One who is much greater than I - He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit. I am not even worthy to untie His shoe."

One day John was baptizing people in the river Jordan. Great crowds were gathered about him. Suddenly John saw Christ coming down to the river. Christ came up to John and wanted to be baptized. John said to Jesus Christ: "You must not be baptized by me. I should come and be baptized by you!" But Jesus answered: "Let it be as I wish, because I want to do all that which other men should do."

Jesus Christ then entered the water and John baptized Him. As Jesus was coming out of the water, the heavens opened above Him and the Holy Spirit of God, like a dove, came down upon Him and God's voice was heard: "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased."

**Jesus Calls Men to be His Disciples*