

June 25th

Saints ZECHARIAH and ELIZABETH
Parents of St John the Baptist

Optional memorial

Zechariah, from the priestly order of Abijah, had married Elizabeth, a descendent of the family of Aaron. Both of them were righteous before God and were waiting for the fulfillment of His promises. From them was born John the Baptist, the cousin of the Lord. There is evidence of their cult in Jerusalem in the late 10th century.

The annunciation of the birth of John the Baptist finds its place among several other similar accounts in the Bible where we see God intervening in history to give to an infertile or older woman, a child with a particular destiny. This is the case of Sarah, Isaac's mother, of Anne, the mother of Samuel, and of the mother of Samson, along with many others.

God hears the prayer of Elizabeth and Zechariah and blesses them with the child whose name means "God gives grace," and these two "righteous" people recognize the gift of God and welcome him with joy: Zechariah prophesies under the influence of the Holy Spirit: "Blessed be the Lord ... because He has visited his people ", and Elizabeth, during Mary's visit to her, will be the first to greet Her as the Mother of the Messiah: "Blessed are you amongst all women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! "

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON: Luke 1: 13

"Do not be afraid, Zechariah, because your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall name him John".

COLLECT

Lord, we glorify you in celebrating the memory of the parents of your Precursor, Saints Zechariah and Elizabeth. Through their prayers, grant us the grace to love you above all things and to witness to the fulfillment of your promises.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ...

FIRST READING

A reading from the Book of Judges 13: 2-5a

There was a certain man from Zorah, of the clan of the Danites, whose name was Manoah. His wife was barren and had borne no children. An angel of the LORD appeared to the woman and said to her, "Though you are barren and have had no children, yet you will conceive and bear a son. Now, then, be careful to take no wine or strong drink and to eat nothing unclean. As for the son you will conceive and bear, no razor shall touch his head, for this boy is to be consecrated to God from the womb"...

The Word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM Luke 1: 76-79 (R. 68)

R. "Blessed be the Lord, for he brought redemption to his people".

1. And you, child, will be called prophet of the Most High, for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways.

2. To give his people knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins,

3. Because of the tender mercy of our God by which the daybreak from on high will visit us.

4. To shine on those who sit in darkness and death's shadow, to guide our feet into the path of peace."

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Luke 1: 42

R. Alleluia. Alleluia.

Elizabeth cried out in a loud voice and said, "Most blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb".

R. Alleluia.

GOSPEL

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke

1: 5-17

In the days of Herod, King of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah of the priestly division of Abijah; his wife was from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. Both were righteous in the eyes of God, observing all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blamelessly. But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren and both were advanced in years. Once when he was serving as priest in his division's turn before God, according to the practice of the priestly service, he was chosen by lot to enter the sanctuary of the Lord to burn incense. Then, when the whole assembly of the people was praying outside at the hour of the incense offering, the angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing at the right of the altar of incense. Zechariah was troubled by what he saw, and fear came upon him. But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zechariah, 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, for he will be great in the sight of (the) Lord. He will drink neither wine nor strong drink. 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. He will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah to turn the hearts of fathers toward children and the disobedient to the understanding of the righteous, to prepare a people fit for the Lord."

The Gospel of the Lord.

Or else:

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke

1: 57-64. 67-70

When the time arrived for Elizabeth to have her child she gave birth to a son. Her neighbours and relatives heard that the Lord had shown his great mercy toward her, and they rejoiced with her. When they came on the eighth day to circumcise the child, they were going to call him Zechariah after his father, but his mother said in reply, "No. He will be called John." But they answered her, "There is no one among your relatives who has this name." So they made signs, asking his father what he wished him to be called. He asked for a tablet and wrote, "John is his name," and all were amazed. Immediately his mouth was opened, his tongue freed, and he spoke blessing God.

Then Zechariah his father, filled with the holy Spirit, prophesied, saying: "Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, for he has visited and brought redemption to his people. He has raised up a horn for our salvation within the house of David his servant, even as he promised through the mouth of his holy prophets from of old" ...

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Lord, accept the offerings that we consecrate to you. May You, who have so wonderfully answered the prayers of Saints Zechariah and Elizabeth, satisfy the desires of those who hope in you. Through Christ our Lord.

PREFACE

Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts...

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

Luke 1: 45

"Blessed are you, Mary, who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled."

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Lord, renewed by the body and blood of your Son, we pray that, having received these gifts, we may render you enduring thanks.

Through Christ our Lord.