

The Nativity of John the Baptist – 24th June, 2023

St. Ninian's, Castle Douglas & Christ Church, Dalbeattie

SCO11079 & SCO10918

<https://dcdchurches.org.uk/> tel: 01556 505894

PAX

Dear friends in Christ

It is a pleasure to be writing this to you as I stand in for Christopher who is relaxing on a well-deserved break.

I have been 'learning the ropes', attending meetings and functions and generally seeing how things work in the two charges. Christopher and I have also been exploring the 'brave new world' of technology which is where at least part of the future of ministry and Church is clearly going to lie.

Thank you for making me so welcome as I continue to build on the relationships begun during my previous periods of deputising in both charges.



Today we remember the Nativity of John the Baptist - and this is remembered in the Catholic Church as a solemnity, which means it ranks with Christmas and Easter as one of the most important feasts of the Church's year.

Why is this the case?

Well to begin with, John and Jesus were cousins, which makes them part of the family who trusted God, were faithful to God and who were therefore chosen by God to carry out His most important act of love for humankind.

John was also the means by which people came to know Jesus for who and what he truly was - the Son of God, the Saviour of humankind and God in human form as the second person of the Trinity.

But ... the fact that this feast is given such importance can be deceptive - and it is a trap into which many people fall. What made John so special is the fact that he avoided the trap! What am I talking about? The fact that he did not put himself on an equal footing with Jesus - he knew that he was simply the prophetic voice who pointed towards something more important. Many people asked if he was the 'messiah' - the saviour foretold in Scripture. How easy it would have been for him to say 'yes' and enjoy the status and importance that would go with that role - but his calling was different!



He was a crucial part of the process of recognition - hence Jesus telling John that he must have the humility to fit in with God's

plan and act as 'baptiser' rather than 'baptisee' in the river Jordan.

*Jesus replied, "let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfil all righteousness". Then John consented" **Mt 3:15***

It felt 'wrong' to John, but it is often those who have genuine humility who we should trust to be our leaders, particularly in the Church.

All too often, there is a temptation to believe that we 'know better' than God and go to against either his plan(s) or his message. If ever we catch ourselves doing that, then this feast, together with the beheading of John which we remember on 29th August, should remind us that our role as Christians is to serve with humility and to give our lives and preferences over to others in any kind of spiritual or practical need.

Yours in Christ,

John

Assistant Priest

