

## Dear Greeters,

*The following is a reflection on the Readings for the Feast of the Nativity of John the Baptist, June 24, 2018*  
By: Mary van Balen, Celebration Publications

Today we celebrate the birth of John the Baptist. The Gospel recounts his naming, but besides distinguishing one person from another, what's in a name?

I knew a 2-year-old who, for a week or so, refused to answer to her given name. Instead, convinced she was Disney's famous mouse, she answered only to Mickey. It caused confusion when someone called out, "Hi! Julia," only to be ignored. But perhaps that little one knew something about the importance of a name: It reflects who we are. Or in her case, who she thought she was.

In the ancient Hebrew world, a name often indicated not only the identity of a person, but also their mission.

Today's first reading is one of the four Servant Songs found in Isaiah. The speaker declares that God called him from birth, giving both name — my servant, Israel — and the mission to witness God's glory with words strong and true as a sharp-edged sword. The servant was not only to restore the tribes of Jacob and survivors of Israel's exile; he was to be light to the nations so all people could know God's goodness.

While we might squirm at the designation of "servant," in Isaiah's time, to be the king's servant meant being particularly close to the ruler, the one who knew him well and who was entrusted with matters of great importance. To be the king's servant was an honor.

The psalmist echoes the servant's words, proclaiming that God intimately knows him, forming him in the womb. He gives thanks that he is wonderfully made.

We, too, are known and wonderfully made. "Not me," you might object. We aren't as handsome or beautiful as we'd like. When we compare ourselves to others, we don't measure up.

But what makes us wonderfully made isn't our looks, our IQ or the material goods we amass. It's the bit of God's self that has been knit into our bones. We have been given a name by God and a mission that grows out of it. We are made servants in Isaiah's sense of the word, entrusted with the sacred task of being God's love in the world.

In Acts, Paul quotes from 1 Samuel: "I have found David, son of Jesse, a man after my own heart." The Hebrew word used here for "heart" is *lêbâb*. It isn't simply the home of emotions, love and valentines. It's the center of everything. God's heart is God's being. When searching for the next king, God was looking for someone who could carry out the divine purpose and love with God's own heart.

John the Baptist had a unique part in carrying out

that purpose. Gabriel announced the name to Zechariah before his son was conceived. It would be "John," meaning "God has shown favor." The messenger also revealed the child's call to go before the Lord and prepare the people to receive him.

John lived up to his name. After years in the desert listening and growing in the Spirit, he fearlessly witnessed to the greatest of God's favors: the coming of Jesus, the Servant-God. Jesus was not just close to God's heart. He was God's heart. And just as he shared it with the servant, with David and with John, he shares it with us.

That spark of divinity, planted in each of us, gives us our name and our mission.

Today, with our country and world torn by fear and division, we ask ourselves, "What can one person do?" Today's readings provide an answer. Listen deep within yourself and hear God speaking your name. Be faithful to it and be God's love in the world.

You may think that your efforts will be in vain. But like the servant in Isaiah, like John, place your trust in God, for it's God's love shared that transforms the world.

### **Some Information:**

*We have some of your email addresses but not all of them. We can send a "Greeter Schedule" and a "Letter" to you by email.*

*If you want to receive your "Schedule" by email, please send your email address to me at [cno-lan@steseton.com](mailto:cno-lan@steseton.com) If I do not receive an email from you, I will mail out your schedule. Also, if you have a computer, you can go to our website at [www.steseton.com](http://www.steseton.com), left click on "Spiritual Life" and left click on Ministers Schedules," and then left click on the "Greeter Schedule. You can always check to see if you are scheduled.*

- *Many thanks for all your cooperation with the added duties during this past liturgical year. We could never do all that we accomplish without you.*
- *Enclosed is the Greeter Schedule from June—August 2018. The schedule is also on our website.*
- *Please make sure there are bulletins out after each Mass. If needed, empty the boxes under the tables.*
- *There will be a second collection on June 9th & 10th for Retired Priests and on June 30th & July 1st for Peter's Pence.*
- *Mark your calendars, Sunday, August 4th is the 3pm Outdoor Mass and Picnic.*

Thank you for your gift of hospitality. Your attention to every part of Greeting makes our liturgies run so smoothly. May you appreciate the gift of this liturgical season—the slower pace of Ordinary Time.

Claudia Nolan

