

Fr. Romeo Evangelista Homily
Weekday Mass Wednesday, June 24, 2020
Cycle A

The birth of a child is always a great gift to a couple, a family, a clan. It is, therefore remarkable that Elizabeth and Zechariah decided to name their newborn “John” which literally means “God has shown favor”.

Every child is a divine favor. This is an assurance that the life of the race will go on. Many couples long to be blessed with even just one child in their union but they have none. St. Mother Teresa of Calcutta loved to tell people: “The birth of a child is God’s way of saying that he still believes in man”. The child is also a mystery to await: his first smile, his first word, his first walk, etc. With this, hope, anticipation, joy and rejuvenation spring anew in the heart of a home. At the same time, there is wonderment over what the child will be, over what greatness in life will attain.

On the other hand, the story of the birth and the naming of John the Baptist, and the reaction of excited and gossipy neighbors, remind me of the words of the Arab mystic-poet Kahlil Gibran: “Your children are not your children. They are like arrows that we shoot from our bows. Once launched into the air, they have flights and causes that are their own. They have roles and missions to accomplish”. Zechariah belonged to the priestly class; Elizabeth, too belonged to a priestly clan. But John, called to be the precursor of Jesus, did his missions not in the elegance and mystical environment of the venerable Temple. John spent his days in the barrenness and monotony of the desert. He was a prophet who challenged the status quo. John did not wear the elaborate, colorful, and symbolic vestments of his father, Zechariah; he followed the Prophet Elijah’s drab way of dressing up in camel’s hair and leather belt.

Every child is born into a family and culture, but every child is for the service of God and of humanity – one sent to fill up a space in the universe, one gifted to contribute in furthering God’s plan and His creation.