

**Confirmation Mass – Briscoe Unit
June 24, 2019**

Dear brothers we are blessed today as we come together in the power of the Holy Spirit. Our Lord is here with us to fill us with his light, and to seal our brothers who will be receiving the sacrament of Confirmation. We are even more blessed to be celebrating this Mass on the Solemnity of the birth of St. John the Baptist.

We do not celebrate too many saints' birthdays in the Church. Of course, we celebrate Jesus' birthday at Christmas, and we will celebrate Mary's birthday in September. But we in the Church take the time to remember the birth of John the Baptist. The reason why is important in a special way for our time here today.

My brothers, remember the mission of John the Baptist. He was born to announce the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. From his birth he had a mission. His father was not able to speak until he announced his mission. His mother carried him in her womb when she met Mary carrying Jesus in hers, and John leapt for joy. He showed the glory of the Lord even before he was born. John lived his life in the dessert announcing the Lord's coming and bringing people to baptism and repentance. He was an amazing man and disciple of the Lord. It makes sense that we celebrate his birthday. But that is only part of the story.

It would be easy to think that John's mission was unique, and that none of us could ever be called to such a life. But the truth is, we celebrate this solemnity exactly because John's mission is our mission, too. We each have our different circumstances, but we are still called to do what John did: Tell the world about the love of God in Christ Jesus.

We should pray again the words of the Psalm: “I praise you, for I am wonderfully made.” This is not a boasting kind of thing. It is not a prayer saying, “Look how great I am.” It is a prayer that gives thanks to God for making us who we are. We are his beloved disciples. He has made us able to do his work. Each of us is made in such a way that we are able to point to Jesus with our lives, and to bring others to the love of God.

You who are about to be confirmed, the Holy Spirit is coming to overshadow you, to fill you up. The Holy Spirit is coming to remind you who you really are. You are missionary disciples of the Most High God. You are men loved by God, who have been sent out into the world to share his love with others. You are joining the Church as we follow John the Baptist in proclaiming the Lord. Hear your loving God as he tells you these words in scripture: “I will make you a light to the nations, that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth” (Is).

This again is not about glory for ourselves. John the Baptist came not to be famous for himself, but to show the glory of God. He came to serve those around him and to show them how much God loves them. So, my brothers, you can do the same. You can carry out the work of God. As Pope Francis has put it: “In our hearts, there must always be this love to serve the other, to be at the service of others.”

Thanks be to God that we are wonderfully made. Thanks be to God for this celebration of the birthday of John the Baptist. And thanks be to God for our holy work. May you all love the Lord and his people, and let the Holy Spirit remind of who you are: missionary disciples sent by God to do his work and prepare the way of the Lord.