

HOM ILY - JUNE 24, 2007
FEAST OF THE BIRTH OF JOHN THE BAPTIST
First Communion of Catiadele Slater

Introduction

A major point of today's feast centers on vocation. Clearly the child born to Zacharia and Elizabeth had a high destiny. Indeed the Gospel we just heard recounting John's birth leaves out the lovely prayer his father pronounced on that same occasion:

“You little child shall be called a prophet of the most high God.
For you will go before the Lord to prepare His way
To give God's people knowledge of salvation...
In the tender compassion of our God
The dawn from on high shall break upon us,
To shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death
And to guide our feet into the way of peace.”

John was to announce all of this immediately before Jesus arrived on the scene
So his birth, which we celebrate on this Sunday is a remarkable moment in the unfolding
of Salvation History.

I

What does all of this have to do with us – 21 centuries later.
What does it have to do with us - on this Sunday, the 24th of June 2007
 -half a world away from where that took place
 -here at Our Lady Queen of Peace and
 -celebrating Catiadele's First Communion ???

I would suggest that it has very much to do with us.

II

John the Baptist's vocation was no more real or indeed no more important than each of
our vocations. Each of us, each person born, has a God-given calling – something to do in
this life. Our vocation may not be as dramatic as John the Baptist's but it is no less real or
important.

III

One of the saddest statements I ever heard came from a fellow with whom I grew up. We
played ball together, double dated and maintained our friendship over many decades. He
said to me one time: “Joe, I never knew what I wanted to do with my life”. Obviously he
felt that he never knew what his vocation was.

Even a sadder situation is that of the millions (billions) of people who might know what they want to do but never have the opportunity to do it. Due to a lack of education, or health care – economic systems that exclude them or other social prejudices, so many people called by Go0d to contribute in this world will forever be frustrated in the fulfillment of that call. These are tragic situations – and avoidable!

Conclusion

As we witness Catiadele take this significant step in her faith journey, surrounded by her parents, Bethann and Ruker, her brother Bobby and her sisters Casella and Megann; accompanied by her aunts and uncles and grandparents, we have every confidence that she will be guided by them to realize her God-given potential – to know her vocation.

And we should offer a prayer on this important occasion in Catiadele's life that she as well as all of our young ones will see to it in their lifetimes that every person born has the opportunity to contribute to a world of dignity, freedom, unity, justice, peace and love for all.