

THE DAWN OF OUR SALVATION

There can be no disputing the key role that St. John the Baptist played in the great plan that God has for mankind. He is the Forerunner of the Saviour, coming with zeal and spirit to proclaim and identify “the lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.” It was his task to prepare the hearts of men and women so that they could receive the light of the Son of God through the baptism of repentance that he preached.

The story of the CONCEPTION OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST is a shining example of faith and obedience to the will of God. In the Gospel according to St. Luke, we hear of the high priest Zachariah and his wife Elizabeth, who are described as being ‘righteous before God.’ They were both advanced in years and while they joyfully served the Lord, they were saddened by the fact that they had no children.

One day while offering incense in the temple, Zachariah was greeted by an angel, who said to him: “Do not be afraid Zacharias for your prayer is heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call him John. The fears of Zachariah immediately turned to doubt. “How shall I know this!” he questioned, “for I am an old man, and my wife is well advanced in years.” His weakness of faith did not go unnoticed by the angel, who told the high priest “I am Gabriel, who stand in the presence of God. Behold, you will not be able to speak until the day that these things take place, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their own time.” So Zachariah, who now knew that, not only would he have a son, but that his son would be destined to “turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God,” was unable to share this wonderful news with anyone! Nine months later, he and Elizabeth would openly rejoice in the birth of their son.