

Our Patron Saint: Saint John the Baptist

Faith Seeking Understanding

By

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Throughout history, and even today, artists have used images to help tell stories. In earlier centuries it was mostly the wealthy who could read; books, including bibles, were not found in common households. The community had to rely on priests to tell them the bible stories. Some of the ways these messages were conveyed was by the use of images. The images, whether they be in paintings, mosaics, sculpture or any other art form, have very important clues to help the often-illiterate viewers understand the message that is being portrayed. Churches were full of images that held a wealth of information to help the community learn about and connect with their faith. The bible messages were literally painted and sculptured and tiled on to nearly every surface of the churches and cathedrals.

As we celebrate the feast of St John the Baptist on June 24th I would like to ask you; Would you recognise St John the Baptist? Many images of Saint John the Baptist will have the following clues;

- John would be wearing rough clothing possibly camel skin signifying his time in the wilderness
- Sometimes he would be either wearing or sitting on a red robe. The colour red is significant in its symbolism of Holy Spirit, presence of God or the blood of martyrs.
- He is frequently seen pointing, either upwards or towards a lamb. This is extremely significant as it shows that he is an important prophet who points us towards Jesus, The Lamb of God. John was a humble man continually telling his followers that he was not the Messiah but that Jesus was. He preached repentance and baptised people with water telling them that soon they could be baptised in the Holy Spirit.
- Many paintings picture John baptising Jesus in the Jordan river, pouring water over the head of Jesus, often with a clam shell. He doubted that it was his place to be baptising Jesus but Jesus insisted that this was the way God wanted it done.
- John was often painted holding the cross of martyrs because he was beheaded for his faith.

All these symbols help to tell the story of John the baptiser and the meaning behind the Gospel messages that we hear about him. How many of these symbols can you see in this painting and what story could you tell from them?



The words in this word search go in all directions. Have fun finding the words that talk about Saint John the Baptist and his life.

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I F T D S E R T T W C C H Y W
P E P Q S N L K B O Z C H E I
L F Z G E M O I U U A W C C L
L D A R N U E S Z M O N U W D
O E T V R I I L E A A D T R H
C R N O E N H L D T B N Q D O
U Y I X D P H C N E I E J V N
S T O Q L A H E A A R C T Q E
T R P L I F P G S E J L X H Y
S A M R W E J O H N R A Y P U
A M W Z R G N I S I T P A B F
B E H E A D E D E L B M U H J
M K G O Z A C H A R I A H A P
O L J Z P A T T Q E V E O R O
    
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| BAPTISING | BEHEADED |
| COUSIN | CAMELHAIR |
| DOUBT | ELDERLY |
| ELIZABETH | HUMBLE |
| JOHN | LOCUSTS |
| MARTYRED | POINT |
| PREACHING | REPENTANCE |
| SAINT | WILDERNESS |
| WILDHONEY | ZACHARIAH |