The Nativity of St. John the Baptist – June 23/24, 2018 – Reflection

Did you ever really lose it; fly off the handle at someone or something? Maybe another driver cut you off on the highway and you laid on the horn so hard that you almost pushed the steering wheel into the engine block. Maybe your kid got on your last nerve and you shouted, "I brought you into this world and I can take you out!!" Maybe your husband has promised to take care of that honey-do list but never seems to get around to it and so, instead of nagging him yet another time, you whap him upside the head with the cast-iron frying pan! Maybe your girlfriend or boyfriend is jealous. At first it was flattering, but now it just feels insulting, like they'll never really trust you and you shout, "I'm outta here!" as you slam the door on them for good. Maybe your team makes a big turnover, misses a clutch shot, fumbles in the red zone, scores in their own net and you're so mad, so frustrated, that you hurl your beer can at the 56" flat screen TV, shattering it into a million little pieces.

Afterward, when you calm down a little and are ashamed of the way you acted, embarrassed by what you said and the hurt you caused, have you ever just thrown up your hands and said, "I lost my head … I just lost it!"

I know that's just a form of speech, not to be taken literally, but the saint whose birthday we celebrate today, did just that, literally and totally: St. John the Baptist lost his head for Christ rather than sell out the truth and live a lie.

King David asks in the 116th Psalm, "What shall I render to the Lord for all He has rendered unto me?" What shall I give to God for all God's given to me? What should my love for God look like?

Abel, the shepherd, offered his first prized lamb, the best in his flock while his brother grudgingly offered leftovers.

After a 40 day sail amid waves and wind and tempest, Noah offered loving sacrifice to God in thanksgiving for the safety of his faithful family and the remnant of creatures to re-create the face of the earth.

Abraham, who had waited a whole lifetime for a son, was willing to sacrifice the boy's life if God so demanded.

Mary of Nazareth was willing to sacrifice her reputation, her betrothal, her privacy so that she could give herself totally to God with the "Yes" to the angel's question that saved the rest of the human race.

When Peter and Andrew, James and John heard Jesus' call, "Come, follow me," they left everything: family and friends, home and business, comfort and security to give their hearts and their lives to Christ.

Mary of Magdala and Matthew the collector of taxes and Katherine Drexel gave up their wealth.

Damien of Molokai and Gerard Majella gave up their health.

John Fisher and Thomas More gave up power, position, and life in the kingdom of England on this earth in service to the King of the Universe.

Martha and Mary and Lazarus gave their hospitality, their home, their trust to Jesus.

And, John the Baptist, who testified to the coming of the Messiah; when at last he found Him: "Behold, the Lamb of God," lost his head for eternal life rather than keep it for a few more years of earthly life.

Jesus stands before you, revealed in His word, given in His Body and Blood, calling in His command to go out to all the world and proclaim the truth, the Gospel.

What shall I render to the Lord for all He has rendered unto me?

Would I lay down my life for Him as He did for me?

Would I lose my head?