

# A Message from Mary Beth

Learning of John the Baptist's tragic death must have brought great sadness and grief to his disciples. To think that a young girl could cause the death of God's own messenger is most distressing, especially when viewed through our modern eyes. But this was not unusual in ancient times, when kings could yield immense power and were known to be cruel. John the Baptist's death came about because he criticised Herod for marrying his brother's wife, Herodias. This inflamed the ire of the new wife. So when her daughter danced before the king and he foolishly promised to give her anything she asked, the trap was set for John's execution. Taking instructions from her mother, the young girl asked for John's head on a platter. What a gruesome request!

John - - God's messenger sent to prepare the way for Jesus Himself and the proclamation of God's Kingdom -- became an early sacrifice for that Kingdom. And his death forewarned of Jesus' own brutal death to come.

There were other similarities in their lives -- the birth of each brought strange prophecies; they began their mission with great popularity; but gradually the uncompromising nature of their teaching aroused hostility from the authorities. That hostility arose from fear of the authority that both Jesus and John showed in their ministry, an authority which came from God -- an authority through which they spoke God's truth. Ultimately, they both died for it.

But with Jesus death, the parallel with John's death ceased.

The story of John's death is a warning against petty irritation which can swell into hatred, or weakness that can give way to evil for the sake of ego.

But with Jesus' death came the promise of salvation. His death did not mark the end, but rather, the beginning of new life in God's eternal Kingdom. It is an invitation to us all to repent of our sins and seek God's grace and salvation through the blood of His Son.

As our reading from Ephesians proclaims:

*Praise to the glory of God's grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved -- Our Saviour, Jesus Christ.*

May you find God's peace and salvation in your daily walk with Christ.

Mary-Beth

