

GOSPEL PEARLS

Pointless conversation

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The time came for Elizabeth to have her child, and she gave birth to a son; and when her neighbours and relations heard that the Lord had shown her so great a kindness, they shared her joy. Now on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child; they were going to call him Zechariah after his father, but his mother spoke up. 'No,' she said 'he is to be called John.' They said to her, 'But no one in your family has that name', and made signs to his father to find out what he wanted him called. The father asked for a writing-tablet and wrote, 'His name is John.'

'And they were all astonished. At that instant his power of speech returned and he spoke and praised God. All their neighbours were filled with awe and the whole affair was talked about throughout the hill country of Judaea. All those who heard of it treasured it in their hearts. 'What will this child turn out to be?' they wondered. And indeed the hand of the Lord was with him.(Luke 1, 57-66)

The priest Zechariah had doubted God's promise that he would become a father in old age. As punishment, God had silenced him during the pregnancy of his wife Elizabeth. This served Zechariah to reflect on the fact that faith in God must be absolute. In fact, God seals his mouth to pointless human conversations and opens his ears to the inspirations of the Holy Spirit. How often, during the day, do you get lost behind pointless conversations?