

## St. John The Baptist Feast Day

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On June 24<sup>th</sup>, Freemasons celebrate the Feast of St. John the Baptist. Freemasonry historically acknowledges St. John the Baptist and St. John the Evangelist as its patron saints; reveres their memory; points to their exemplary lives in its ritualistic work, and dedicates its Lodges to them.

In our American version, one of the least understood symbols is a certain point within a circle, bounded by two parallel lines, with the volume of sacred law at the top.

The symbol is actually based on an old astrological and alchemical symbol. The point in the center represented the Earth, which was thought to be the center of the universe. The heavens were believed to spin around the Earth, represented by the circle. The two lines represented the summer and winter solstices, the longest and shortest days of the year. For thousands of years, these days were celebrated as pagan feast days all over the world, and they were especially important to farming societies, because they were the astronomical methods of determining planting seasons.

In about 300 A.D., the Catholic Church began to dedicate popular pagan feast days to the saints. June 24<sup>th</sup>, the longest day of the year, was declared St. John the Baptist day, while December 27<sup>th</sup>, the shortest day, was dedicated to St. John the Evangelist. Collectively, Masons refer to them as the Holy Saints John.

The symbol also shows the Volume of Sacred Law at the top. In Masonry, the point represents the individual, and the circle is the boundary of his actions. Taken as a whole, the symbol implies that a Mason should consult the sacred texts of his own religion to achieve the proper balance between passion and intensity on one side, and knowledge and education on the other. In other words, he should balance education, excitement and faith to effectively subdue his passions. In a way, it is a graphic representation of the conscience.

John the Baptist was zealous, while John the Evangelist was learned, and by picking both of them as patron saints, Masons symbolically united both passion and reason.

