

The Living Word

Fourth Sunday of Advent, Year C

19 December 2021

First Reading Mi 5:1-4

Out of you will be born the one who is to rule over Israel.

The Lord says this:

You, Bethlehem Ephrathah,
the least of the clans of Judah,
out of you will be born for me
the one who is to rule over Israel;
his origin goes back to the distant past,
to the days of old.
The Lord is therefore going to abandon
them
till the time when she who is to give birth
gives birth.
Then the remnant of his brothers will
come back
to the sons of Israel.
He will stand and feed his flock
with the power of the Lord,
with the majesty of the name of his God.
They will live secure, for from then on he
will extend his power
to the ends of the land.
He himself will be peace.

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 79:2-3. 15-16. 18-19. R. v.4

**(R.) Lord, make us turn to you;
let us see your face and we shall
be saved.**

1. O Shepherd of Israel, hear us,
shine forth from your cherubim throne.
O Lord, rouse up your might,
O Lord, come to our help. (R.)
2. God of hosts, turn again, we implore,
look down from heaven and see.
Visit this vine and protect it,
the vine your right hand has planted. (R.)
3. May your hand be on the man you have
chosen,
the man you have given your strength.
And we shall never forsake you again:
give us life that we may call upon
your name. (R.)

Second Reading Heb 10:5-10

I am coming to do your will.

This is what Christ said, on coming into the world:

You who wanted no sacrifice or oblation,
prepared a body for me.

You took no pleasure in holocausts or
sacrifices for sin;
then I said,
just as I was commanded in the scroll of
the book,
'God, here I am! I am coming to obey
your will.'

Notice that he says first: You did not want what the Law lays down as the things to be offered, that is: the sacrifices, the oblations, the holocausts and the sacrifices for sin, and you took no pleasure in them; and then he says: Here I am! I am coming to obey your will. He is abolishing the first sort to replace it with the second. And this will was for us to be made holy by the offering of his body made once and for all by Jesus Christ.

Gospel Acclamation Lk 1:38

Alleluia, alleluia!

***I am the servant of the Lord:
may his will for me be done.***

Alleluia!

Gospel Lk 1:39-45

Why should it happen that I am honoured with a visit from the mother of my Lord?

Mary set out and went as quickly as she could to a town in the hill country of Judah. She went into Zechariah's house and greeted Elizabeth. Now as soon as Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leapt in her womb and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. She gave a loud cry and said, 'Of all women you are the most blessed, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. Why should I be honoured with a visit from the mother of my Lord? For the moment your greeting reached my ears, the child in my womb leapt for joy. Yes, blessed is she who believed that the promise made her by the Lord would be fulfilled.'



Reflection by Fr Michael Tate

This little gospel story tells us that 'the baby in Elizabeth's womb leaped' and not merely leaped, but leaped 'for joy'. Is this just poetic hyperbole?

We know that beautiful music can have a wonderful effect on life in the womb. Good vibrations. Here, the presence of Jesus, being carried by Mary in her pregnancy, had a wonderful effect on the life carried by Elizabeth. Very good vibrations.

From the moment of the conception of Jesus, good vibrations reverberated out to all human beings. The good news is that you and I and every human life ever conceived is visited by Our Risen Lord Jesus Christ, and we receive that visit as Original Blessing.

There is a further and consoling truth. Every mother or father who has lost a baby too early needs to know that the same extraordinary sense of Our Lord's presence was felt by your baby. That Divine Presence conferred a powerful Original Blessing on that little life within the womb, and that same Presence accompanied your baby into the everlasting embrace of Divine Love in Heaven.

We could pause a moment to pray using the very words of Elizabeth, reciting:

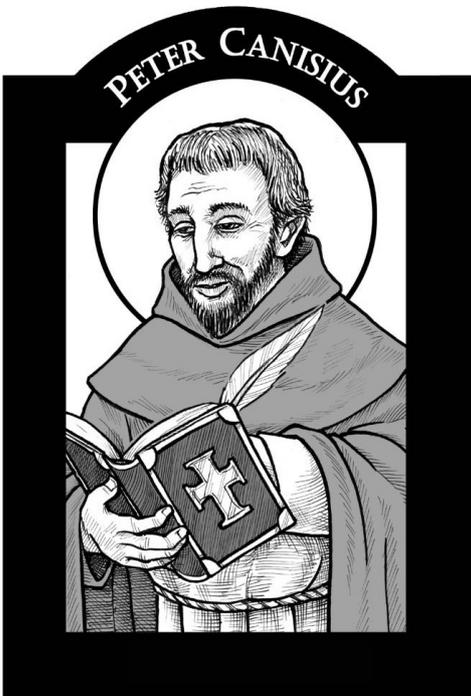
Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee.

*Blessed art thou among women,
and blessed is the fruit of thy womb,
Jesus.*

Holy Mary, mother of God, pray for us sinners

now and at the hour of our death.
Amen.

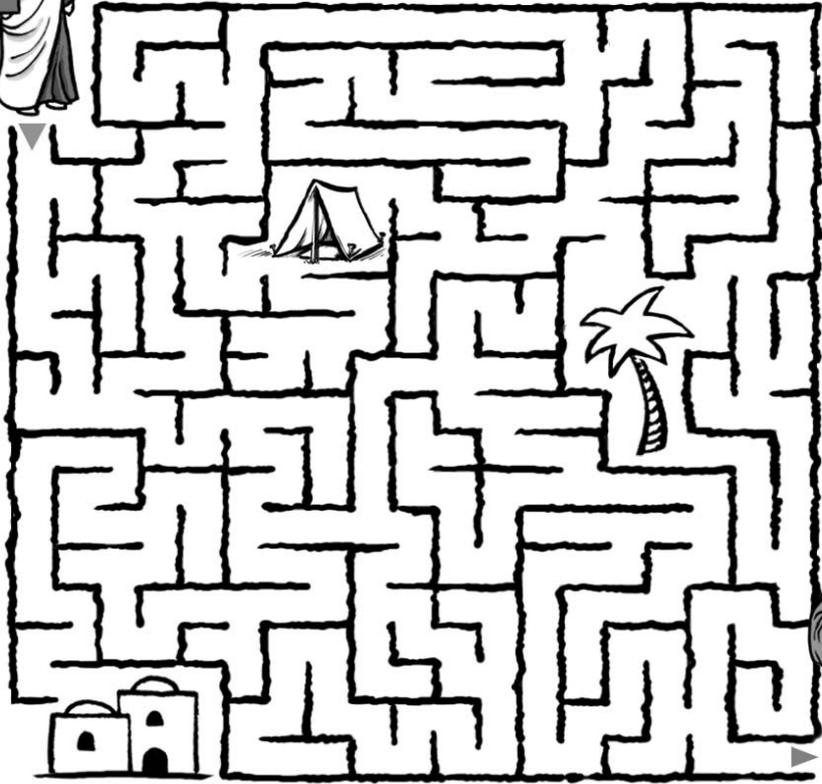
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St Peter Canisius was born in Holland in 1521. He studied canon law at Louvain, but later came to the conclusion that a legal career and marriage, as arranged by his father, were not to his liking. He joined the Jesuits and spent his time in prayer, study, teaching and care of the sick. St Peter was a prominent preacher and he attended the Council of Trent, then later taught at the first Jesuit school at Messina. He was later called to Rome to work with St Ignatius; the founder of the Jesuit order. After posts as rector and vice-chancellor of the University of Ingolstadt, he was sent to Vienna, which was in need of reform. In 1555, his famous Catechism was published and eventually translated into 15 languages during his lifetime. Considered one of the most influential theologians and writers of his time, St Peter Canisius was declared a Doctor of the Church in 1925.



When Mary heard that her much older cousin Elizabeth was with child, she hurried to Elizabeth and Zechariah's house in the hills of Judea. Can you help Mary find the correct path to her cousin Elizabeth?



Wordsearch

Try to find these words:



- baby
- believed
- blessed
- Elizabeth
- greeting
- happy
- heard
- hurried
- loud
- Mary
- moved
- woman

P	B	O	A	N	C	N	H	Y	B	A	B	U	C	S	F	B
Z	O	H	V	U	T	W	G	T	X	E	Z	M	H	R	G	G
F	O	T	V	G	N	I	T	E	E	R	G	A	O	N	O	R
L	F	Q	N	F	D	U	O	L	Q	B	P	Q	R	V	Y	H
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U	A	S	H	E	A	R	D	Q	W	H	A	Z	I	Z	M	H
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R	P	Q	S	H	N	S	M	A	R	D	O	X	B	R	P	A
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