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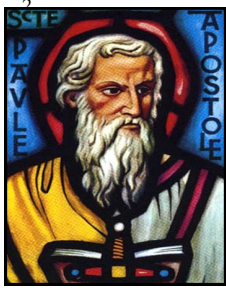
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FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Gospel Summary

In today's Gospel we hear the story of the Visitation of Mary to Elizabeth, her cousin. We are told that upon Mary's arrival the infant in Elizabeth's womb leaped for joy. That infant is John the Baptist. John will grow up to become the prophet who prepares the way for the child within Mary's womb—Jesus, the Lord.

Reflection for Parents

When the angel Gabriel appeared to Mary, he told her that Elizabeth was already in her sixth month of pregnancy. Mary again models true discipleship for us. Even though she too is with child and could easily choose to stay home, she says yes to helping and serving her elderly cousin. Today's Gospel tells us that she traveled "in haste" to do so. Take time today to consider older family members or neighbors who need your help and support. As Advent days continue, how will you say yes to serving them?

Bringing the Good News Into Your Family

Plan a family visit to an older friend or relative you haven't seen in awhile. Decide on a special gift or treat to take to that person. Once with him or her, give your friend or relative the gift of your presence—a listening ear, time, and a helping hand.

Discussion Starters

1. One of my favorite relatives is . . .
2. Something that fills me with joy is . . .
3. This week I will share the gift of joy by . . .

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***** THE OFFICE WILL BE CLOSED
ON DECEMBER 25TH, 26TH & 27TH.
WE WILL REOPEN ON MONDAY,
DECEMBER 30TH *****

Visit Our Website

www.stpaultheapostleto.archtoronto.org



Mass Intentions

Saturday, December 21

4:30pm

- +Vincenza Darmanin

Sunday, December 22

Fourth Sunday of Advent

9:00am

- Missa Pro Populo

10:30am

- +Nenu Dingli
- +Cory, Joseph Bigeni & Family
- +Charles Camilleri
- +Emanuel, Carmela, Tessie & Joseph Psaila
- +Emanuel Cutajar
- +Rita Zammit

12:00 noon

- +Maria Fenech

Monday, December 23

9:15 am

- +Rita Caruana

Tuesday, December 24

9:15 am - *Advent Mass*

Christmas Eve

8:00 pm & Midnight

- For living & deceased Parishioners

Wednesday, December 25

Christmas Day

9:00am, 10:30 am & 12 noon

- For living & deceased Parishioners

Thursday, December 26

9:15 am

- +Dorothy Dileo

Friday, December 27

9:15 am

- +Doris Micallef, Joseph & Catherine Micallef

From the Pastor...

As we draw close to the Feast of Christmas, the Church invites us to reflect on the beautiful gospel of the Annunciation. God sent the Angel Gabriel to Nazareth where Mary lived. The angel says to her: "Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with you." The Virgin gives her full consent to the divine will: "Be it done unto me according to your word." From this moment on, she accepts her vocation and begins to put it into practice. Her vocation is to be Mother of God. In the exercise of her Motherhood, she was adorned with all the graces and privileges, which made her a worthy abode for the Most High.

For each one of us, our vocation is the central theme of our lives. To follow and to love one's own vocation is the most important and fulfilling thing in life. God gives us the graces that we need each day, each moment of our lives to say "yes", to be faithful to him. As we continue our journey to Christmas let us ask the blessed Virgin to make us contemplatives, to teach us to recognize the constant calls from God when he knocks at the door of our heart.

During this season of Advent, we are reminded of the importance of preparation, both in our external lives and within our hearts. Advent is a time of waiting and anticipation, but it is also a time of action and reflection. We prepare not just for the celebration of Christmas, but for the coming of Christ into our lives in new and profound ways. Just as Mary prepared to become the Mother of God, we too are called to prepare ourselves to receive Christ more fully.

Mary's response to the Angel Gabriel is a model of perfect obedience and trust in God's plan. Despite the uncertainty and potential challenges ahead, she embraced her vocation with grace and humility. Her "yes" to God's call is an inspiration to us all, encouraging us to respond to God's invitations in our own lives with the same openness and faith.

As we light the candles on our Advent wreaths and participate in the various traditions of this holy season, let us also light the candles of hope, peace, joy, and love in our hearts. These virtues are the hallmarks of the Christmas season and should be the guiding principles of our lives. In a world that often seems filled with darkness, we are called to be beacons of Christ's light, reflecting His love and mercy to those around us.

Let us also remember that the first Christmas was marked by simplicity and humility. God chose to come into the world as a helpless baby, born in a humble manger. This profound act of love reminds us that true greatness is found not in power or wealth, but in humility and service. No one is afraid of a tiny child, and through this vulnerable beginning, God invites us into a relationship based on trust and love.

As we continue our Advent journey, let us take time to reflect on our own vocations and the ways in which we can say "yes" to God's call in our lives. May the Blessed Virgin Mary intercede for us, helping us to become contemplative in spirit, attentive to God's presence, and responsive to His will. In this way, we prepare not only for the celebration of Christmas but for the ongoing transformation of our hearts and lives in Christ.

May the joy and peace of this holy season fill our hearts and homes, and may we carry the light of Christ into the world, bringing hope and love to all we encounter. Amen.

Christmas Blessing for Families to Pray During Their Family Meal:

Heavenly Father, we thank You for Your Son's birth and His life. Help us remember that He is the reason for this season. We are grateful for our family and friends, and for the opportunity to gather and enjoy a Christmas meal together. Thank You for providing this meal before us. Let us not forget those who have no families or no place to celebrate and share a Christmas meal. Bless our fellowship as we celebrate this Christmas season. Amen.

December 22, 2024