

DECEMBER 19, 2021
Sunday of the 4th Week of Advent
Luke 1: 39-45

“BRING JESUS TO OTHERS ALWAYS.”

“On the morning of the 4th of December 1982 in Melbourne (Australia) Nick Vujicic was born. His parents were shocked because their first born had neither hands nor legs. A baby boy without legs and hands. It took a number of months of tears, questions and grief before they were able to come to terms within their own hearts. Nick grew up with the support of his parents and gained strength to challenge his own destiny. Still young, he now has a Bachelor’s degree in Commerce. He is also a motivational speaker and loves to go out and share his story with others. In his speeches he emphasizes that God has a plan, and we must accept the plan of God and submit to the will of God. These words come from a man who does not have hands and legs.”¹

Most of the time we have our plans in life: we want to study well to achieved recognitions and honors, to have a good job to support one’s parents and siblings, to have a beautiful wife or a loving husband and children, to have a good life and career, and so on. Sometimes we rely on our own selves and power, we forget Someone powerful who can help us achieve our goals. We forget to pray and rely on God’s plan for us. In our gospel, we heard that Mary traveled in haste to visit Elizabeth. It took three to four days from Nazareth to Ein Kerem, the town of Zechariah and Elizabeth. Traditionally, when people travelled, they have companions in caravan for support and protection. During this time Joseph was not yet living with Mary and not with her in this travel. However, St. Luke does not focus on this details but on the two pregnant women.

“Pope Benedict XVI has written that the Visitation is more than just a trip into the country for a young girl from Nazareth. As he explains, when Mary ‘set out in haste’ to visit her cousin Elizabeth, she embarked on the world’s first Eucharistic procession. She

¹ stories4homilies.blogspot.com

carried Christ into the world. She was a living tabernacle. And so it is that her cousin became the first to experience Eucharistic adoration, and to share in the first Benediction. 'Blessed are you,' she says to Mary. 'Blessed is the fruit of your womb. Blessed are you who believed.' Three times, she speaks the word 'Blessed.' I can't help but be reminded of our own Benediction, when the bells ring three times, and then we chant the divine praises: 'Blessed be God...'"² Mary's Visitation immediately follows the Annunciation narrative. Authentic Christian holiness is the interconnecting of vertical and horizontal dimensions, forming the sign of the cross. The deep relationship with God, the vertical dimension in the Annunciation is proven and tested by dealings and relationship with fellow human beings, horizontal dimension in the Visitation. Mary interacted, 'prayed', her deep relationship manifested in the Annunciation, her vertical relation with God was concretely showed to her Visitation to Elizabeth, horizontal relation with others. Remember that's what Jesus commanded us to do: Love of God and Love of neighbors.

"Elizabeth and Mary both were selected to give birth to these very special babies because of their faith in God. They did not have affluent homes or great educational advantages. All they had was simple faith. And that's important. Happy families don't just happen. They are part of a package. Some of you young people may complain that your parents expect too much from you. They have too many rules and regulations. Maybe your parents are a little old fashioned, a little behind the times. Let me clue you in: it is these same characteristics that make you so fortunate. If they were any other way, they wouldn't put your happiness before their own, they wouldn't make sacrifices in your behalf, they wouldn't have surrounded you with love ever since you first came into the world. Because they are people of strong values, you can rest assured that they will always be there for you regardless of what may come. It's all part of a package. It has to do with a commitment that they have made - to God, to one another, and to you. The family that prays together generally does stay together, as trite as that may sound.

² stories4homilies.blogspot.com

Faith was important to Elizabeth and Mary. They trusted God.” We, too, need to trust our God.

So, my brothers and sisters, let us trust our Lord that all things are possible amidst difficulties and problems. Like Mary, even if she knew that to have a baby put her to shame and disgrace, ridicule and mockery, she gave her Yes, her Fiat for God, and now her visitation brought joy to Elizabeth and the baby in her womb. Through this visitation, Jesus and John the Baptist was introduced to one another, and John leapt for joy recognizing Jesus. Let us do the same, amidst trial and troubles, have faith and trust the Lord, recognize Him in our lives, and most especially bring joy and hope to others. Let us bring Jesus to our brothers and sisters today and always.

Let this be our prayer: “Lord Jesus Christ, fill me with your joy and love, and increase my trust and belief that all things are possible and all your vows and promises will be fulfilled. Like the Blessed Virgin Mary, may I be instrument of bringing joy and hope to those who are overburden, sad, lonely and desperate through my care, concern and help, my own manifestation of ‘visitation’. Amen.”