

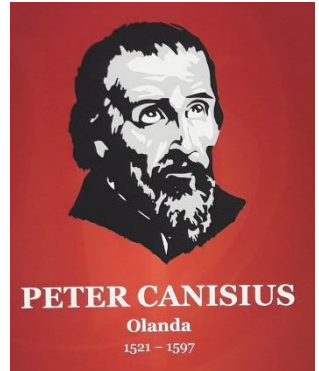


Diocese of Westminster

AGENCY FOR EVANGELISATION
MARRIAGE AND FAMILY LIFE

‘Learn From Me’

Reflecting on the Lives of Saints
and Blesseds of Catechesis



“If you have too much to do, with God’s help you will find time to do it all.”

**St Peter Canisius: Feast, 21st December
(27th April, Jesuits)**

Opening Prayer

O God, who for the defence of the Catholic faith made the Priest Saint Peter Canisius strong in virtue and in learning, grant, through his intercession, that those who seek the truth may joyfully find you, their God, and that your faithful people may persevere in confessing you. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen.

(Collect, Proper of the Saint)



Scripture Reflections 2 Timothy 4.1-5

In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I solemnly urge you: proclaim the message; be persistent whether the time is favourable or unfavourable; convince, rebuke, and encourage, with the utmost patience in teaching. For the time is coming when people will not put up with sound doctrine, but having itching ears, they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own desires, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander away to myths. As for you, always be sober, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, carry out your ministry fully.

Matthew 5.13-19

Jesus said to his disciples,

"You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything, but is thrown out and trampled under foot.

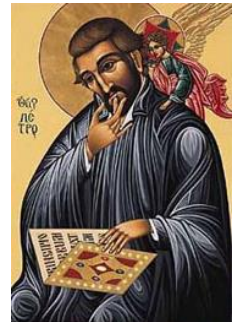
"You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house.

"In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven. "Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfill. For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not one letter, not one stroke of a letter, will pass from the law until all is accomplished.

- Is there a word or phrase that stands out or remains with you after reading these passages?

Biography

- Born, 8 May 1521 at Niemguen, Netherlands.
- Educated in Cologne, Germany, studying art, civil law and theology.
- Joined in the Jesuits on 8 May 1543.
- Taught at the University of Cologne, and helped found the first Jesuit house in the city.
- Ordained in 1546. He travelled and worked with Saint Ignatius of Loyola who was his spiritual director in Rome, Italy.
- Teacher of theology and preacher in places such as Ingolstadt, Germany, 1549, in the Cathedral of Saint Stephen in Vienna, Austria in 1552; the royal court confessor, he continued to work in hospitals and prisons, and during Lent in 1553 he travelled to preach in abandoned parishes in Lower Austria.
- He led the Counter-Reformation in Germany, Austria, Bohemia, and Switzerland, and his work led to the return of Catholicism to Germany. His catechism (*see below*) went through 200 editions during his life, and was translated into 12 languages.
- Founded Jesuit colleges in Ingolstadt, Prague, Dillingen, and Fribourg. Jesuit provincial superior.
- Spent the remainder of his life in Fribourg, Switzerland. He taught, preached, edited books, and worked to support the Catholic press and printers in many cities.
- Died: 21 December, 1597, Fribourg, Switzerland.
- Beatified: 20 November 1864 by Pope Pius IX at Saint Peter's Basilica, Rome, Italy
- Canonized: 21 May 1925 by Pope Pius X and proclaimed a Doctor of the Church.



Catechisms

Personal Context

- Known to history as a catechist, BUT
- had a pastoral heart that was troubled.
- Agonised over where his priorities should lie: pastoral work? Teaching? Provincial? Writer?
- Ultimately, his writing received pride of place in the list of his accomplishments: it was the best way for him to be of service. From seeing his writing as a distraction from pastoral work, Canisius had come to prefer his writing to every other kind of work he might undertake.
- Ministry categorized by :
 - considering the poor, the spiritually hungry and
 - the young, the common good
- This is perhaps why Peter Canisius's catechism looks so different from nearly every other catechism that has been written in the history of the Christian Church
- Relations with Protestants
 - advised charity and moderation. He opposed theological debates with Protestant leaders and, in general, discouraged discussion of Catholic distinctives such as indulgences, purgatory, and monastic vows. He believed such efforts only heightened division and embittered relations.

Catechetical work :

- imparting the faith to the young
- instilling a way to live that kept the poor in mind, that was rooted in prayer and discernment, and that never neglected the common good.
- Helped launch the Catholic press

The First Catholic Catechisms

Summa Doctrinae Christianae,
(Summary of Christian Doctrine
(1555)

the Catechismus Minor (Smaller
Catechism) (1556)

the Parvus Catechismus
Catholicorum (Small Catechism
for Catholics) (1558)

a magnum opus in multiple
volumes meant for clergy and
laymen.

directed to young men, abridged
version of the multivolume Summa
Doctrinae Christianae.

for young children between 9 and
14 years of age.

Structure of Catechism

Two books:

Wisdom:

Faith (following the Creed),
Hope (following the Our Father),
Love (following the Ten Commandments) and
the Sacraments.

Justice:

'fleeing evil'- sin and vice;
'seeking good' - virtue, good works, the beatitudes and the evangelical
counsels, among other things.

Summary:

Canisius's catechism invites its readers to begin in faith and then to put
that faith into practice in the way that we love and serve.

Significance for Catechists

For reflection: What does the life of St Peter say to us as catechists? What
can we learn from him?

Closing Prayer

Let my eyes take their sleep, but may my heart always keep watch for you. May
your right hand bless your servants who love you.

May I be united with the praise that flows from you, Lord Jesus, to all your saints;
united with the gratitude drawn from your heart, good Jesus, that causes your saints
to thank you; united with your passion, good Jesus, by which you took away our
guilt; united with the divine longing that you had on earth for our salvation; united
with every prayer that welled from your divine heart, good Jesus, and flowed into
the hearts of your saints.

(St Peter Canisius)

'Take Away' : Going Deeper

https://www.azquotes.com/author/31915-Peter_Canisius

"Peter Canisius: 'The Best Contribution We can make' Thomas Flowers SJ 23 April
2019" https://www.jesuit.org.uk/sites/default/files/pdf/20190423_1.pdf

Biography, video clips:

<https://youtu.be/Hu0593CmEzc> ; <https://youtu.be/pYS9a2Z0IP4>

<https://www.pathwaystogod.org/resources/st-peter-canisius-sj>

Pope Benedict's audience, 2011: http://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/audiences/2011/documents/hf_ben-xvi_aud_20110209.html

Fr James Crampsey SJ reflections <https://youtu.be/0MGs5HAQhoE>

Acknowledgements

Illustration of St Peter: from 'Saints of Catechesis' exhibition, II International Catechetical Congress,
September 2018, Rome.

NRSV, Weekday Lectionary, Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1994

Biographical notes: Catholic Online

Closing prayer as appears in 'Voices of the Saints' by Bert Ghezzi. Loyola Press

Icon as appears on 'Catholic Online' https://www.catholic.org/saints/saint.php?saint_id=93