

# THEME: ST. JOSEPH IN GOD'S PLAN!

## FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT!

21 December 2025

St. Matthew who wrote his gospel for the Jewish converts went through great lengths to show them that Jesus came into the world through a virgin birth (Mt 1:18-24). He began with Mary as betrothed to Joseph. But before they lived together, she was found with child. Among the Jews, betrothal was the first part of the marriage, constituting a man and a woman as husband and wife though their normal married life would only begin some months later. Thus, any subsequent infidelity was considered adultery which was punished with death of stoning.

Confronted with Mary's pregnancy, Joseph underwent a severe crisis. As a devout observer of the law, he was obliged to report the case to the authorities which meant, according to the law, death for Mary. But being a righteous man, he was also concerned with Mary's welfare. He was sure that he was not responsible for her pregnancy. And knowing Mary, he was also sure that she never had an illicit relationship with another man. So, he decided to divorce her quietly and thus save her from certain death. Deciding thus, Joseph did what any decent person would do and never mind if the law said otherwise.

But even this "inspired" decision of Joseph was not enough for God. Joseph was part of his grandiose plan for the salvation of humankind. To allow Joseph to "quietly divorce" Mary would spoil God's plan. Thus, he intervened. In a dream, an angel (God in visible form) told Joseph about the mystery that surrounded Mary's pregnancy: Mary conceived "through the Holy Spirit" and was to become the mother of the Father's Son. For his part, Joseph was to be the husband of Mary and foster father of Jesus. Continuing his narrative, Matthew said that when Joseph awoke, he did as the angel had commanded him and took his wife into his home, but adding he had no relations with her until she bore a son.

Therefore, Matthew drew the connection of the virgin birth of Jesus with the prophecy of Isaiah, saying, All this book place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet, "**Behold, the virgin shall be with child and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel,**" which means "God is with us."

These words were addressed by Isaiah to Ahab, king of Judah (8th century B.C.). Then the kingdom of Syria and Israel had already invaded Judah but failed to capture Jerusalem (Is 7:10-14). To save the kingdom and the Davidic dynasty, Ahaz decided to align himself with Assyria. The prophet Isaiah, an adviser to the king, opposed the plan. He told Ahaz that the only way to preserve the dynasty of David was to put his trust in God and not by playing politics. And to convince Ahaz that this was how God wanted the problem to be handled, he told him to ask for a sign. But he refused. Just the same Isaiah told him, "**THEREFORE THE LORD HIMSELF WILL GIVE YOU THIS SIGN: THE VIRGIN SHALL BE WITH CHILD, AND BEAR A SON, AND SHALL NAME HIM EMMANUEL.**"

Unknown to Isaiah, when his prophecy was fulfilled, the royal line of David would be preserved forever. For Joseph was of David's line and through him Jesus was placed in the Davidic line. And when Jesus completed his work of redemption, the Father took him back to his side and made him King of heaven and earth-forever.

Though Joseph played second fiddle to Mary, he was nonetheless to play a major role in God's plan. He was to provide Mary and Jesus with the needed care and protection. As he did when he brought them to Egypt to escape the persecution of King Herod. As he did when he took them back to Nazareth when it was safe to return. It was Joseph who accompanied Mary to the temple for her purification and Jesus for his circumcision. And during all these, Joseph worked at his carpentry shop to support his family. In short, Joseph as head of the family carried the mission assigned to him by God as best he could.

We may ask how Joseph was able to carry out all his duties and responsibilities. The answer is simple: he placed himself completely at the disposal of God - as Mary did at the annunciation with her fiat ("Be it done to me"). And with his cooperation, God was able to bring his redemptive plan for humankind to its successful completion.

Like Joseph, each one of us has a mission from God. As we continue our preparation for the birthday of Jesus during this Advent, let us therefore continue to pray for light to discover God's mission for us. And upon its discovery, let us place our trust totally in him as we do our best to carry it out-as Joseph did. Definitely there will be obstacles along the way. But with God on our side, we, too, will triumph in the end. Let this be our special prayer to the infant Jesus on Christmas Day.