

MATTHEW 1: 18-24 2016

Fourth Sunday of Advent 2016

The Homily by Deacon Frank D'Auguste

Joseph was truly a blessed and a unique man in many respects. He was kind and forgiving, this we know because he was not willing to expose Mary to shame. In those days, his “right” as a husband in Mary’s situation could have made this a murder, and even today – in parts of the Middle East – it still does!

I always think about who this man named Joseph was. I have no doubt that, like most men, Joseph was looking forward to the day when he and Mary came together to share their lives. He was probably preparing the home where they would live.

He was busy putting together all the things they would need as husband and wife. I am sure his days were filled with work and his nights with dreams about all the future would hold for them.

Then, like a cold water to the face, came the news that shattered all his hopes and his dreams. Mary is pregnant and Joseph is not the father! For a time, it must have felt like his heart had been ripped from his chest. It must have hurt as every dream he had come crashing down around him. All of his plans, his hopes and his dreams fell from his grasp as though they were grains of sand. It was a time of shattered dreams. But it was not a time where he lost faith and trust and love of God.

Joseph is a model of faith and trust from which we can all learn.

There are only two infant narratives in the Gospels, and they may not be based on facts but on faith and complete trust in God. They are based on a need to understand how Jesus came to be.

These few lines about Joseph from St. Matthew’s account speak volumes on who and what we as Catholics are and should become.

Joseph is an example to people who need to forgive and to move forward with their lives. Joseph willingness to save Mary from the turmoil and pain, and maybe even death, because she was found to be with child and the baby was but

one example of that great love he showed. In looking at Joseph we see examples of kindness, forgiveness, trust and faith that we can follow and imitate.

In the second part of the Gospel, the Angel's delivers God's instructions for Joseph to follow. The instructions are the why, when, how, where and what Joseph is to do. Again he gives us an example of faith and trust that is beyond measure, but is also within our grasp to imitate... even if we have issues believing at his level.

We are the people Jesus saves from their sins. We are all part of this story because we have all been called by name, by virtue of our baptism. We all celebrate this very short season of Advent in many ways, depending upon your culture.

What is good and so comforting to remember is that God so loves us that he sent his own Son into the world to save us from our own sins. This is truly love beyond all understanding. We are like Joseph in that we need to look for – and come to understand – the commands given to us by God.

We are called to love God's Son, Jesus and we are called to care for those who need help and support... no matter who they are.

Joseph is an example of peace and love. Most importantly, he is also a person of compassion, and that is an example that we as Catholics can follow with great joy this season. To show compassion is to present the face of Christ to the world.

The compassion we provide comes in many shapes and sizes, and its limitations are based upon us, but it's not on what we have or how deep are pockets are.

We, as a community, are compassionate through our good works such as those that the St. Vincent de Paul Society does to help those in distress. The Society's ability to help is based upon how many of you care to help the Society. So please remember them during the next monthly collection. We have the "Jesse Tree" in the lobby to remind us that this Season is all about giving. I wish you could see the face of a child or an adult who get a gift that they want or need, the face of someone who realizes that they have not been forgotten.

And don't forget that you can still bring extra gift cards next week. Every gift that you bring in is a gift of love that demonstrates your love of God. If you cannot afford to do a gift yourself, pair with another person and do it together. Try to bring in food for the Food Bank.

We should never see a child in want of food, and, just as important as all these material gifts, are those prayers that you pray for these need. For God hears all prayers. And sometimes a prayer is worth more than all the gold in world. These are examples of compassion for others without considering yourself. This is what Joseph was all about.

The Birth of Our Lord and Master is one that shows the compassion God has for us his adopted children. Let us continue to shower that compassion on others. Let us, this Season, remember and show that the faith and love and trust that St. Joseph showed all those years ago is still there. From my family to your Merry Christmas.