

**Fourth Sunday of Advent – Cycle A**  
**December 22, 2019**  
**Christ the Good Shepherd, OCC**  
**Reflection by Father Charles Blanchard**

First Reading: Isaiah 7:10-14  
Psalm: 24:1-2,3-4,5-6 (7c, 10b)  
Second Reading: Romans 1:1-7  
Gospel: Matthew 1:18-24

Four weeks ago, you and I begin our yearly **pilgrimage** through the events of our salvation history starting with the preparation for the birthday celebration of Jesus and ending with the reflection on his glorious “second coming” as judge at the end of the world.

**Today**, you and I conclude the Advent season through which the readings have called us **To Stay Awake** and **To Be Alert!**

**Where is your faith?**

Recall from today’s scriptures “***The Angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream***”

Matthew’s Gospel continues with this proclamation: “***Do not be afraid to take Mary your wife into your home***”.

In today’s Gospel, **Saint Joseph** is a man about **whom little is known**, but the importance of his role in salvation history is clear.

ØHe was entrusted with the Son of God as his little child;

Ø At first, he was confused about how Mary could have gotten pregnant; but

Ø Upon receiving the words of the angel in a dream, he accepted this Child as his own and cared for Him with a father's love.

It's significant to note that Saint Joseph embraced the Christ Child because of a dream.

But was it only a dream?

You and I all have many dreams and some of them are strange and nonsensical.

So why did Saint Joseph rely upon the authenticity of this dream?

The answer to this question is quite simple.

Even though the dream he had was just that – a dream, it was also accompanied by the gift of faith.

**A DREAM ACCOMPANIED BY FAITH!**

In this way, Joseph knew, with a certainty beyond human reason, that the voice of God had spoken to him and he responded with generous faith.

We may not have dreams through which God speaks to us in the form of an angel, but God does speak to us all day long.

Ø He speaks directly to our minds and hearts;

Ø He works through the care and mediation of countless hosts of angels in various ways; and

Ø God's Angels are constantly bringing us divine messages and inspirations.

The question is whether or not we are listening.

Listening to the voice of God, through the mediation of the angels, is not about us seeing or hearing the angels speak, literally.

Rather, it's a matter of discerning this language of love spoken to us and calling us to faith.

Listen in the silence of your heart, this day, and allow yourself to follow the glorious witness of Saint Joseph as he responded to our Lord's will with perfect faith and trust.

My sisters and brothers, throughout the upcoming Christmas season, may Christ the Good Shepherd be a beacon of faith, hope and love where your faith flourishes: your spines are stiffened for life's journey; and you're able to hear, see and experience Emmanuel – God with Us!

Welcome to "The Small Church with a Big Heart"!

Gracias de Dios para todos!