

Fr. Jeff's Weekly Homily

4th Sunday of Advent

December 23, 2007

READING 1: Isaiah 7:10-14

Listen, O house of David! Is it not enough for you to weary people, must you also weary my God?

Psalm 24

The LORD's are the earth and its fullness; the world and those who dwell in it.

READING 2: Romans 1:1-7

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

GOSPEL: Matthew 1: 18-24

When Joseph awoke, he did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took his wife into his home.

Once when I was at another parish, a worried mother called the church office on the afternoon before the annual Christmas program to say that her small son, who was to play Joseph in the Christmas Pageant, had gotten sick and gone to bed on doctor's orders. "It's too late now to get another Joseph," the director of the play said. "We'll just have to write him out of the script." And they did! Joseph just disappeared from the play. And few of those who watched that night actually realized that Joseph was missing. Joseph is often forgotten. But today's Gospel is centered on Joseph.

Just think! What would have happened if Joseph had refused to participate in raising Jesus? It seems Mary was a strong enough woman to bravely say yes to the angel. She wasn't afraid to travel to visit Elizabeth on her own or to travel home when she was at least three months pregnant. Mary's Magnificat showed she was aware of the injustices in this world. So, true Mary might have made it on her own. But who would have been her protector when Herod came searching for the baby and killed all those innocents? Who would have supported her in Egypt or even Nazareth? There weren't jobs available to most women in those days. Who would have provided the masculine example for Jesus? Who would have cheered for him, given him a father's blessing, and reassured him when he was struggling through adolescence? Jesus enjoyed a human father's love. Joseph put all his own dreams to rest, put his life on the line for Mary and her son; he offers all of us a model brave-heart.

Some think Joseph is the one to go to when we need to sell a house. One of our parishioners, Ann, sent her sister a St. Joseph statue when Pat was trying to sell her house. Pat called and said, "I don't get it. Why did you send St. Joseph's statue?" Ann told her sister to bury St. Joseph in her front yard and he would help sell the house. The lady up north said, "Oh, I don't believe in that kind of nonsense." But when her house didn't sell for awhile, Pat decided to try it. Hoping none of the neighbors saw her; she dug a hole in her front yard and buried Joseph. Nothing happened. In fact she called Ann and told her that the house across the street had sold. Ann asked: "which way was your statue of Joseph facing?" So, feeling quite foolish, Ann dug up the statue and faced it in the other direction. Now more weeks went by and Ann finally confessed to one of her friends that she had even buried St. Joseph but it didn't work. Her friend asked whether Joseph was right side up or upside down. Ann dug up the statue again and as she was about to place it back she thought: "this is ridiculous." So she took the dirt caked statue out of her yard and threw it in the trash. About ten days later she opened the paper and read the headline. It said: "LANDFILL SOLD."

May all your best Christmas dreams come true! God bless you all!

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