

Cycle A – Fourth Sunday of Advent, December 18, 2022

“The virgin shall conceive and bear a son ...”

OPENING PRAYER (Psalm 24)

Leader: The earth is the Lord’s and all that is in it,
the world and those who live in it;
All: For the Lord has founded it upon the seas,
and established it on the river.
Leader: Who shall ascend the mountain of the Lord?
And who shall stand in God’s holy place?
All: Those who have clean hands and pure hearts,
who do not lift up their souls to what is false. Amen



Gospel – Matthew 1:18-24

Whereas Luke’s infancy narrative features Mary, Matthew’s account of the birth of Christ features Joseph. Matthew connects Joseph to the Joseph in Genesis (The youngest son of Jacob, chapters 38-50) especially through the occurrence of a dream in which the angel appears. Joseph is also “from the line of David.” Even though Joseph does not speak, he is a righteous man, embodying all that is holy in the tradition of Israel. Joseph’s openness to God’s spirit prepared him to listen to a dream, receive a message from God, and act on it. Joseph is challenged to trust without knowing the outcome of events – that is the essence of faith.

1. What themes or lessons do you draw from this Gospel account?
2. Recall a time when you were challenged to trust without knowing the outcome.
3. How can we be living signs of “God-with-us” in our parish community and in our world?

LIVING THE WORD

What is God’s challenge for me/us this coming week?

PRAYING THE WORD

Intercession: For women and men in our parish who yearn for signs of God in their lives, who suffer from broken promises and betrayals, and for all those who need a visible expression of “God-with-us” through the care of the faith community.

We pray to the Lord.

Invite other intentions, end with “Our Father ...”

CLOSING PRAYER

Leader: For the prophets and the apostles who announced your coming among us,
All: Blessed be you, O Lord.
Leader: For the Virgin Mary who, by faith, welcomed you into her heart,
All: Blessed be you, O Lord.
Leader: For Joseph, the husband of Mary, who, by his obedience, received you into his family,
All: Blessed be you, O Lord.
Leader: Because you stay with us, Emmanuel, until the end of time,
All: Blessed be you, O Lord.
Leader: Let us share with one another a sign of peace, a peace the world cannot give.