

4TH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Isaiah 7:10-16 Romans 1:1-7 Matthew 1:18-24

HOMILY

The 4th Sunday in Advent naturally sets the stage for the nativity of Our Lord.

Q: Who is at that central stage?

- A discreet quiet man “**who does what is right in the sight of God**” is the lead to the nativity of Our Lord.
- This man Joseph plays an important role in the Christmas story even though he does not get a lot of glory
- He takes the pregnant Mary in his home as his wife.

If this seems mysterious to us, it must have been completely baffling for St Joseph himself.

No doubt, Joseph had to be helped to get the right perspective of what was happening to Mary.

We may look to Mary and ask,

Q: Shouldn't Mary have put him in the picture?

- We need to understand Mary as well.

Mary couldn't just tell him, “**Oh, don't worry Joseph. I wasn't messing around. This is God's child within me. I'm having a virgin birth. I'm going to be famous, you wait and see.**”

- With the best of intentions Mary couldn't just be her own witness.

And realistically she couldn't have even told him that she had a vision from an angel either.

- It's not the kind of stuff that happens in ordinary life.
- Even more, this wasn't “**a once in a lifetime thing.**”
- This was “**a once in eternity sort of thing.**”

It was therefore beyond what Mary could do!

So God needed to send an angel to Joseph did to Mary.

Joseph needed this divine intervention.

It was a big moment of crisis for him.

With the intervention of an angel what was a scandal has been corrected.

OUR OWN MOMENTS OF CRISIS

We have an opportunity, on this 4th Sunday of Advent to reflect on our own moments of crisis as well.

❖ Moments of crisis can show where our real self lies.

In the case of Joseph, prior to the appearance of an angel, this was a perfect moment for Joseph

- a) to slam doors
- b) to be aggressive and
- c) offensive.

Reactions like these erupt out of **self-concern**.

That is what happens to us when

- we are not able to see beyond ourselves.
- the position and care for others is far removed from us.

Prior to the appearance of the messenger, God allowed Joseph to struggle it out for himself.

In that process of struggle great **patience** and **humility** were the pillars of his way forward.

In the hours of his darkness **that great patience** enabled Joseph not to judge

- by what his eyes saw or
- by what his ears heard (cf. Is 11:3.)

His patience paid off: With the appearance of an angel Joseph saw that this this was a divine mission from God to take care of the mother of the Messiah and more importantly, God in the flesh, Immanuel.

Life always throws challenges onto us too.

We too may want to give up and divorce ourselves from the situation.

With a little bit of patience, a revelation from God can change everything.