

December 22-23, 2007
Fourth Sunday of Advent
Isaiah 7:10-14 Romans 1:1-7 Matthew 1:18-24

Good gosh, Christmas Eve and Day are so close you can almost hear the animals in the stable rustling about as their stall is transformed into a birthing center! In these final hours of Advent the Gospel reminds us of something VERY important....faith and grace do not automatically trump common sense or human sensibilities. We hear that Joseph, upon finding out that Mary was pregnant was planning on quietly divorcing her! Well, can you blame him? After so many years of hearing the Christmas story we are dulled to the immense human circumstances that were involved. Who amongst us would believe our daughter or wife if she came home telling us that she was 'pregnant with God's child' because an angel had spoken to her? Uh-huh! Sure...where is the creep that did this to my precious one!?!?! While never appearing within the Nativity narrative, it must have been some conversation that Mary had with Joseph, sharing with him the news of her pregnancy. One can imagine that Joseph responded with the full degree of male/husband feelings as any of us would bring to the situation...he no doubt felt betrayed, humiliated, etc. etc. And despite all these feelings, he must have loved Mary very much because he chose 'to not expose her to shame'...which would have meant the villagers could have stoned Mary to death because of her obviously loose morals! Wow, even in the midst of his great hurt, Joseph found the capacity to love and protect the very woman who had seemingly betrayed him. While we hear that Joseph had a dream in which an angel gave him consolation and sought to mollify his shame...one wonders how long it took for him to truly BELIEVE what he had dreamed. While he embraced Mary...what was the process for him to REALLY accept and believe? So, as we gather in the presence of a fully lit Advent Wreath...remember, even if you don't always know what is going on with your life....that does not mean that the grace of God is not at work in it! And if things get really confusing and hairy...ask Joseph for some guidance on what kept him going....he would love to share!

Thank you for having shared our Advent journey here at Corpus Christi. Having completed the four weeks of preparation....CHRISTMAS is upon us. The Bulletin has the full schedule for you...take an extra copy for your friends or neighbors. Remember, we have arranged parking on Aliso Viejo Parkway for overflow when our parking lots are full...so go ahead and park on the street if you desire. If you are coming to the 9:00 p.m. Mass on Monday, ('It's Midnight in New York') remember that it is probably not the best Mass for young children. Also...bring an APPETIZER to share at the post-Mass reception downstairs. The parish provides the champagne and other beverages...and everybody else chips in and brings something tasty for the appetizers. Finally, with so many fresh faces joining us for Christmas Eve and Day...remember to be the wonderfully welcoming family you are. Some of those joining us will not be used to friendly, chatty people, some will be confused as to this being our Hall and not a 'Church', a lot just won't know where the bathrooms are....so, put on your brightest smile and welcome them with delight. The people joining us for the next few days are NOT burdens....they are family just waiting to be won over and welcomed to our table....and that's where you come in. Thanks. As the cloud of Christmas descends and enfolds us, remember, you are loved! FKB