

Fourth Sunday Advent - A – 2019-20
Isa. 7.10-14///Romans 1.1-7///Matt. 1.18-24

→a woman woke up one morning, rolled over to her husband and said.... “last night I had a dream that you gave me a diamond necklace....what do you think that means?”

→the husband thought for a moment and said, “you’ll find out tonight”

→and so, all day the wife eagerly awaited the return of her husband that night...and when he finally arrived home....he handed her a package...kissed her and said that he loved her and Merry Christmas!

→well with great anticipation...she quickly tore open the wrappings, remembering her conversation with him earlier that morning....and there inside the wrappings she found a book entitled..... “The Meaning of Dreams!” PAUSE

→DREAMS.....we all have them.....whether at night or throughout the day....they happen....and sometimes....they even.....become a very real part of our lives.

→we easily dream about many things [some good]like...a dream vacation...a dream job...a dream house....

→and then there are dreams perhaps not so good.....like a nightmareor .“only in your wildest dreams would this or that ever happen”

→even the most popular song of this season begins with dreaming of a white Christmas

→dreams are often woven into the fabric of our lives...we use them to tell stories and hopes....to capture our desires and wishes

→and sometimes..... dreams can even teach us a much needed lesson about life and our world....and even our faith.....

PAUSE

→today, on this last Sunday of Advent, right before we enter into the season of dreams this coming week.....we hear about Joseph and a dream that he has.

→it is important to note...that in biblical times, people put a lot of value in the dreams they had.....they were a common method of explaining the unexplainable...of revealing the presence of God...and directing and strengthening one's faith....

→and the dream we hear about in today's Gospel is, without a doubt....

--.....a very real moment of faith for Joseph

PAUSE

→it's not difficult for us to understand the dilemma that Joseph was faced with, when he learns that Mary, his betrothed, was pregnant

---we hear...that when this happens, Joseph... a righteous and faithful man, decides to divorce her quietly...

→I am sure Joseph had some of the same questions we might have if faced with a similar situation....questions like...how can this be? What should I do now?....I care for this woman and want her to be my wife, but that can't happen now?

→and there is no doubt that Joseph truly cared for Mary....and he proves this by refusing to subject her to public ridicule.....because under the law she could have been stoned to death....so instead, Joseph decides to divorce her quietly, without stating any reasons why but rather quietly send her away

→and then what happens.....in a dream...the angel of the Lord appears to Joseph and tells him, not to be afraid to take Mary into his home....and when Joseph wakes up...he does exactly as the angel had commanded him from his dream.....

PAUSE

→it is interesting to note that Joseph...has often been nicknamed the “silent saint” because nowhere in the gospel, is he ever quoted as having “said” anything...

→in fact, throughout the entire Gospel, he is only mentioned as being present at seven events...and in four of these.....his major contribution to the story happens while he is asleep

→but through it all.. Joseph, just like Mary follows the will of God in his life....

→Joseph, a man of great faith, shows us with complete trust, how he accepts the will of God in his life...and perhaps that is the lesson for us this day...as we get ready for Christmas.

→perhaps we are being asked to be like Joseph...and accept the will of God into our lives through our actions, compassion and care for others.

→perhaps we are being asked to be like Joseph...and to wake up to the will of God in our lives without saying a word.

--to do in our lives, what we have been commanded to do...just as Joseph did in his life PAUSE

→[you know] all too often these days...many of us tend to talk a lot about things...but rarely do we take action

→we have a tendency to “hash” things out... “talk” them to death and then, when we are done doing that...we turn it over to a committee for more discussion or for someone else to actually do something...

→but you see...Joseph...didn't do that...Joseph didn't stand around and talk about the role he had been given...in fact he didn't even say a word.....instead...he set out to do what was needed to be done....

→our Advent season is quickly coming to an end...leading up to the great feast of Christmas...

→and just as in our everyday...busy lives....**where we** are in a hurry to get everything done...so too...should there be an urgency in our spiritual lives as well to prepare ourselves for the coming of the Lord Jesus

→and Joseph...the silent saint.....provides for us a great model

→Joseph urges us to put our faith...our complete faith in the Lord and to **quietly continue to work towards making real** the presence of God in our lives and in the lives of those near to us

→it is often said that Christmas is a time of dreams...a time to **dream of** and **hope for** the goodness of all people to come forth...and perhaps this is never more true than with the story of Joseph's dream today

→a dream that teaches us to silently and completely accept the will of God into our lives