

The Fourth Sunday of Advent – 12/21/2025

“This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about. When his mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found with child through the Holy Spirit. Joseph her husband, since he was a righteous man, yet unwilling to expose her to shame, decided to divorce her quietly.”

The above was written by Saint Matthew and he shared one piece of knowledge that Saint Joseph was not yet aware of.

Saint Joseph did not yet know that Mary had conceived the child through the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit.

How could he have possibly known this? Let's just say he was confused to say the least.

But according to the law he had to dismiss Mary. Consequently, this apparently unwed pregnant woman would have almost inevitably been stoned to death for the sin of adultery.

But there is one problem. Saint Joseph decided to divorce Mary quietly. In other words, he was trying to fulfill the law while at the same time avoid the consequences of doing so.

Perhaps this reveals the inner turmoil that was going through this righteous man's mind.

Saint Joseph always followed the Law as his infallible guide to life. I would venture to say he loved the Law more than anyone else, with the exception of Mary, and it had never failed him before.

And then when Mary came along, the Law came to life like never before. Ironically, in his eyes and heart, she put flesh and bone on it.

And yet now according to the Law he was supposed to divorce the very one who had brought it to life. He was probably never more confused in his life than at that moment. How could this be?

But he trusted. And being a righteous man and not wanting to make a rash decision I suspect he went to see his rabbi.

Imagine his rabbi was thinking that Joseph was angry with Mary. But that wasn't the case. He was confused but somehow he knew Mary had done nothing wrong.

For Saint Joseph it was the Law that was betraying him, not Mary.

I can imagine his rabbi saying to him. Joseph, go home and sleep on it and tomorrow you will know better what to do. Which is exactly what he did and we all know what happened.

“Behold, the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, ‘Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary your wife into your home. For it is through the Holy Spirit that this child has been conceived in her. She will bear a son and you are to name him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.’”

The Blessed Virgin Mary had literally brought the Law to life in her womb. She provided the second Person of the Most Holy Trinity, the Word of God, with her own flesh and blood and truly brought God into the world like never before.

Sometimes we might be afraid to trust the teachings of the Catholic Church but they rest on the foundation of the Word made Flesh.

We may think that the world has changed and we know better but God always has a greater plan and certainly knows a lot more than we can ever know.

So if we trust in his plan and in the teachings of the Catholic Church that Jesus Christ, the Word-made-flesh, founded, then in the end, like Saint Joseph, everything will work out infinitely better than we could have ever imagined.

We just need to trust even when we can't see things clearly because God will always come through in the end with something that we could never have expected.