



Bringing Home the Word

Fourth Sunday of Advent (A)
December 21, 2025

Holy Voices

Fr. Joseph Juknialis

Instincts come in various shapes and sizes. They may simply be gut feelings, or dreams that seem to speak more than a nighttime fantasy trip. Sometimes, they appear in the form of daydreaming that takes us to another place, or they can be the silent voice of God. Whatever they may be, there are times when they demand our attention.

In *Saint Joan*, a play by George Bernard Shaw, Joan of Arc has a conversation with Robert about her conviction regarding what God is calling her to do. Joan says to him, "I hear voices. They come from God."

Robert disagrees. "They come from your imagination."

"Of course," says Joan. "That is how

messages of God come to us."

Saint Joseph, the husband of Mary, placed a heavy credence on his dream, believing that the dream to keep pregnant Mary as his wife was the voice of God, and so Joseph does just that. Much later, he again listens to a dream and takes his young family to the safety of Egypt and then back home to Nazareth. Those nighttime dreams could have easily become daytime nightmares. Yet, for Joseph, there was something that kept him from simply dismissing them.

Sometimes our inclinations and inner voices may not seem practical, and yet, even as we find ourselves second-guessing them, we think we need to listen to them. When the inclination is one toward goodness, that may very well be the voice of God. †

A Word from Pope Leo XIV

I think it is important for all of us to learn how to listen more, to enter into dialogue. First and foremost, with the Lord: always listen to the word of God. Also listen to others...to know how to listen without judging, not closing the doors [and] thinking that we have all the truth and no one else can tell us anything.

HOMILY, ROME, MAY 11, 2025



Sunday Readings

Isaiah 7:10-14

The Lord himself will give you a sign.

Romans 1:1-7

Through [Jesus Christ] we have received the grace of apostleship.

Matthew 1:18-24

"Behold, the virgin shall be with child and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel," which means "God is with us."



Sometimes our inclinations may not seem practical, but they may very well be the voice of God.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

ONE? TWO? REFLECTION

- Have you ever followed an inner voice with which others disagreed?
- Who do you trust to tell you if your instinct is good?



Prepare with Open Minds and Hearts

Mark G. Boyer

O Flow'r, whose fragrance tender / With sweetness fills the air,
Dispel in glorious splendor / The darkness of everywhere.
True man, yet very God, / From sin and death now save us,
And share our ev'ry load.

"Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming," Verse 3

***Jesus—indeed the
literal presence of
God with people.***

In the opening of his Letter to the Romans, Paul summarizes the other two biblical texts assigned for this fourth Sunday of Advent. He declares that God's Son was descended from David according to the flesh but established as Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness through resurrection from the dead. After presenting an extensive genealogy, Matthew declares that Joseph is a descendant of David. As [Joseph is] foster father of Mary's child, that makes the One conceived in her womb by the Holy Spirit a descendant of David, too. Isaiah had long ago told King Ahaz, a descendant of David, that the Lord would give him a sign of a son, who would be called Emmanuel, to indicate that God was with his people in Judah during the time of crisis in which Ahaz was king. Matthew stretches this prophecy to apply it to Jesus, the incarnate presence of God, indeed the literal presence of God with people, true man yet true God.

The third verse of "Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming" also captures the essence of today's Scripture texts. Jesus is the rose, whose fragrance fills the air with sweetness. He is the Savior of the world, the One who frees all from sin and death. Isaiah prophesied his coming. The Virgin of Nazareth conceived him. Joseph dreamed about him. And Paul put into words his gospel of obedient faith. As we prepare to celebrate Jesus' birth in human history, we should lift our heads and open our minds to the glory of the Flower of Jesse's stem, Jesus Christ. †

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Wisdom from Catholic Update

From "The Holy Family: An Exemplary Model for Living a Life of Faith"

Mary is the new Eve. Preserved as she was from any stain of original sin, she lived a life of trust and love. The most natural thing for her was to run toward God. Mary is our example. If you are hiding from God, Advent is the perfect time to let yourself be found. If there is some interior wound or failure that keeps your heart far from fully receiving God's love, then take the Blessed Mother's example and return trustingly to him. Hear God tell you the same thing he told her: "Do not be afraid, Mary." Strive to follow Mary's lead and always respond just as she did, as she says in Luke 1:38, "May it be done to me according to your word."

Catholic Update—a subscription newsletter published eleven times a year—explores Church tradition and teaching on contemporary topics. For more information, call 800-325-9521 or visit Liguori.org.



Lord Jesus, so that the
world may put away
the weapons of war and
embrace the ways of
peace, love, and holiness,
we pray—

Be born in us,
be born in our world.

The Redemptorists

WEEKDAY READINGS

December 22–27

Monday, Advent Weekday:

1 Sm 1:24–28 / Lk 1:46–56

Tuesday, Advent Weekday:

Mal 3:1–4, 23–24 / Lk 1:57–66

Wednesday, Advent Weekday:

2 Sm 7:1–5, 8b–12, 14a, 16 / Lk 1:67–79

Thursday: Nativity of the Lord (Christmas):

Is 52:7–10 / Heb 1:1–6 / Jn 1:1–18 or
1:1–5, 9–14

Friday, St. Stephen:

Acts 6:8–10; 7:54–59 / Mt 10:17–22

Saturday, St. John:

1 Jn 1:1–4 / Jn 20:1a, 2–8

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