

Fourth Sunday of Advent (A)
St. Joseph, Teach Us How to Prepare for Christmas
Isaiah 7:10-14; Psalm 24:1-2,3-4,5-6; Romans 1:1-7; Matthew 1:18-24

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

We now enter the fourth Sunday of Advent! As this final week of Christmas preparation begins, let us look beyond the busyness of Christmas traditions and reflect on the genuine longing of our hearts: for hope, love, and renewed faith. Let's focus on St. Joseph, whose quiet strength embodies the spirit of Advent.

This weekend, the psalmist encourages us to open our hearts to Jesus: "Let the Lord enter; he is the king of glory" (Ps 24:7c & 10b). How do we let the Lord into our lives? How can his glory shine through us?

Let us reflect on these questions through the lens of St. Joseph's disposition as presented in the Gospel. He is a silent figure. We do not hear his words, but his actions make clear that he offered himself, his whole life, as a gift to God. He is described in a single yet significant sentence: "Joseph, her husband, was a righteous man" (Matt. 1:19). This description stands in stark contrast to the attitude we learned from King Ahaz, who refused to listen to the prophet Isaiah (cf. Is. 7:10-12).

We never hear St. Joseph speak, yet his silence makes us think. The quiet of a good person invites us to reflect on how we let the Lord into our lives and allow his glory to shine through us. Let's be inspired, even disturbed, by St. Joseph's silent disposition.

Brothers and sisters, our world today needs more righteous people—not only in government but also in families, schools, workplaces, parishes, and communities. St. Joseph shows us what this means: he **VALUES** silence, **PROTECTS** others, and **SEEKS** God's glory (VPS). These three qualities are essential to living a righteous life.

A righteous person loves silence to hear God's voice. St. Joseph does not argue, explain, or defend himself. In his quiet and in a dream, God spoke to him: "Do not be afraid to take Mary into your home" (Matt. 1:20). This reminds us that making time for silence each day can help us hear God's guidance and strengthen our resolve to do what is right.

Today, our world is noisy with opinions, gossip, social media, misinformation, fake news, resentment, and anger. Many conversations are dominated by strong opinions and self-promotion, leaving little time for silence or reflection. Often, decisions are made quickly and emotionally, without prayer or listening to God. It's important to slow down and reflect rather than rush, because mistakes can happen, and we might hurt ourselves or others. St. Joseph offers us a practical lesson: If you want to hear God, be silent. If you want to make wise choices, pray first. A righteous person does not hurry. They pause, listen, think, and pray.

A righteous person protects others and does not take advantage of them. When Joseph learned of Mary's situation, he could have exposed her to save himself. Instead of using the law to protect his own reputation, he chose to protect Mary's dignity. His righteousness was evident in this simple choice: he protected rather than turned away. This attitude is essential in our communities and families today.

When a righteous person has power or authority, they use it to care for and protect others. In doing so, they take part in God's saving work and make their role a source of good news. No position, no matter how high, brings good if it is used to steal, manipulate, deceive, or take advantage. We cannot imagine someone who loves Jesus using their position to harm others. That is wrong on earth and in heaven.

A righteous person seeks God's glory, not their own. St. Joseph never sought recognition or credit. He did not want to be noticed. His role was to serve, not to stand out. He cared about God's plan, not his own name. The Gospel says, "When Joseph awoke, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him" (Matt.

1:24). He made no excuses, offered no complaints, set no conditions, and delayed not. He did what the angel told him. That is beautiful! I hope we can be like that, too. When we wake up, may we first think of the Lord and try to do his will rather than start the day with complaints. A righteous person asks one question: "What does God want me to do?"

Today, many problems come from people seeking their own glory—money, power, influence, or popularity. This is exacerbated by a culture of fame and popularity on social media, where people seek more likes and attention to boost their image.

St. Joseph shows us that true righteousness means living for God's glory, even when no one is watching. He did not protest; he trusted God. He did not change the world by speaking loudly but by living rightly. Sometimes, the best way to correct others is to live rightly yourself. Do what is right and live it, not just talk about it.

As we prepare for Christmas, let's pray for our community, our families, our country, and the world. May God raise up more people like St. Joseph—those who value silence, listen to God, protect others, and seek God's glory rather than their own.

Only then will we truly live out the words of the responsorial psalm:

"Let the Lord enter; he is the king of glory."

St. Joseph, pray for us!

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