

ALL SAINTS

CATHOLIC CHURCH & SCHOOL



Love God • Serve Others • Form Disciples

**December 20 & December 21, 2025;
Fourth Sunday of Advent**

Deacon Ed's Homily

Joseph's Silent Yes

Matthew 1:18-24

Today's Gospel gives us Joseph's story. And if we're honest, Joseph often feels like the "background character" in the Christmas narrative. Mary gets the Annunciation...the shepherds get the angels...the Magi get the star.

But Joseph? While sleeping he gets a dream. Joseph doesn't say a word in Scripture. But don't let that fool you. Joseph's role is absolutely essential in salvation history ... the story of God's love for us, showing how God acts through time to bring us back to Himself, the story culminating in Jesus... and continues now through the Church until the end of time. And Joseph is a perfect model for us today.

Jews of Jesus' time understood marriage more in terms of a civil contract rather than a sacrament and betrothal or engagement was taken very seriously and had legal consequences. The couples were much younger than today's norm – minimum age then was 13 for males; and 12 for females.

Imagine Joseph's situation. He's betrothed to Mary. As a young man, Joseph is planning a life, a home, a family. And then he discovers Mary is pregnant... AND he knows the child isn't his. Can you imagine the heartbreak? The confusion? The sense that everything Joseph thought his life would be ... has just collapsed!

Joseph is righteous and he follows the Jewish laws. He doesn't want to shame Mary, but he also doesn't know how to move forward. He's stuck in that place we all know too well: when life doesn't make sense, when the plan falls apart, when we don't know what to do next.

And it's right there—in the middle of Joseph's crisis—that God speaks. God sends an angel in a dream who tells Joseph not to be afraid and to take Mary as his wife, for the child conceived is from the Holy Spirit.

I want to point out that God doesn't give Joseph all the answers. He doesn't explain how everything will work out. God simply says: "Do not be afraid." And that is enough for Joseph.

We often talk about Mary's "yes" at the Annunciation. And rightly so—Mary's agreement with God's plan ... Her permission is the entry to the Incarnation.. the mystery of God becoming man in the birth of Jesus.

But Joseph's "yes" is just as necessary. Mary gives her body... her womb. And Joseph gives his name ... his

families' lineage. And together, it is Mary's and Joseph's cooperation that allows Jesus to be both ... Son of God and Son of David.

Think about that: salvation history hinges not only on Mary's courage but also on Joseph's obedience. Without Joseph's "yes," Jesus would not legally stand in "David's line" of descendants. God's plan depends on both of them saying yes.

Joseph's obedience leads to action. He takes Mary into his home. He names Jesus. He flees with them to Egypt. Joseph works, he provides, and he protects.

This is remarkable... God entrusts Himself to the care of a carpenter. Jesus, the Savior of the world depends on Joseph.

And here's the lesson: God entrusts Himself to us too. He places people in our lives—children, spouses, friends, fellow parishioners—and says, "Protect them. Care for them. Be faithful." Joseph shows us that holiness is not about grand speeches or dramatic miracles. It's about showing up, day after day, with courage and love.

Joseph's silence in the Gospel is not weakness ... it's strength. It's the silence of a person who listens, who trusts, who acts.

In our noisy world of social media, endless commentaries, and constant distractions —Joseph's silence reminds us that sometimes the most powerful sign is not what we say ... but what we do. Mary's fiat and Joseph's silence together show us the balance of word and deed ... proclamation and contemplation. Both are needed... Both are holy.

Joseph's story might speak to some of us as we await the next step in our parish life with the Journey in Faith. Just as Joseph had to trust God's plan when everything seemed uncertain, we too are being asked to trust God as our parish life will change in a few months.

We know adjustments are coming. These changes can feel unsettling... even painful. But just as God reassured Joseph, He reassures us: "Do not be afraid."

Joseph's obedience brought stability to the Holy Family. Our obedience and trust can renew and refresh our parish families. Joseph protected the fragile beginnings of the Incarnation. We are called to protect and nurture the fragile beginnings of a new pastorate... whatever that may look like. Joseph's silence allowed him to listen deeply. Like Joseph, We should listen too.

The angel's words to Joseph speak to us today. Do not be afraid when life doesn't make sense. Do not be afraid when the plan falls apart. Do not be afraid when God asks you to trust Him without all the answers. Emmanuel—God with us—is here.

As we approach Christmas ... we know Mass next year will be different. Let's imitate Joseph... courageous in crisis... obedient in uncertainty. Let's embrace today and welcome tomorrow. And let's walk together supporting one another, trusting that God is guiding us just as He guided Joseph.

When Joseph said "yes," the world changed.
When we say "yes" ... God, can change the world through us too.

