

**December 18<sup>th</sup> 2022 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent – Year A – Matthew 1:18 - 24**

<sup>18</sup>Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. <sup>19</sup>Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. <sup>20</sup>But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. <sup>21</sup>She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” <sup>22</sup>All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: <sup>23</sup>“Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel,” which means, “God is with us.” <sup>24</sup>When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife.”

<p>➤ <b>Read and re-read</b> – out loud and slowly the Gospel.</p> <p>➤ <b>Meditate</b> - on reading as being spoken to you, an experience in your life</p>	<p>➤ <b>Pray</b> - Thanksgiving – Repentance – Petition</p> <p>➤ <b>Action</b> – Attitude (Call to change / to act /to do</p>
---	---

**December 18<sup>th</sup> 2022 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent – Year A – Matthew 1:18 – 24**

In this Sunday’s gospel we see how Jesus came to be born. We can see Joseph as symbolic of those whose vocation is to welcome the one who bears God within. It was a long, painful journey for Joseph in which he had many fears. Even though he hesitated at first he gave his total commitment. He was inspired by the Holy Spirit. Mary says very little. She is the symbol of those who bear God within them but they must wait until people welcome them to allow God’s work to be born. This gospel reminds us that no matter what happens in our lives and in the world that God asked to come among us, Mary accepted and Christ made his home with us.

Have there been times in our lives when we were afraid to come near to Jesus because we felt we were not good enough. Like Joseph we hesitated but Jesus sent someone to us just like the angel who came to Joseph to help us to believe that Jesus welcomes each one of us with open arms and will help us to bring Him to those who are searching for Hope and belief in themselves.

**Prayer:**

**Thank you Lord** for the times when we hesitated in carrying out your wishes because of fear of what people would think of us or we had no belief in ourselves. You sent your Holy Spirit to help and guide us and we were surprised what we could do and say in your name

**Forgive us Lord** for the times we did not recognise your will for us because we were afraid and did not feel confident enough to come close to you.

**Lord help** all women who are pregnant especially those who are not accepted by their families. Help them not to be afraid and to put their trust in you.

