

# Christmas I

Galatians 4: 1-7 & Matthew 1: 18 – 25

December 29, 2024

The gospel of this First Sunday after Christmas presents to us a man of whom a little was written about, Joseph. He has much to teach us regarding our relationships with God and our fellow men and women. We learn from Matthew, the gospel writer, that Joseph was a “just man, ” meaning that he conformed to faithfully observing God's commandments.

Joseph also lived the virtue of Obedience. This morning's Gospel tells us that while Joseph thought on these things, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream telling him that the child was from the Holy Ghost and that he should take Mary as his wife. To obey requires listening, accepting what is said, and following through in action, even when it is challenging. Joseph was obedient and as such he modeled obedience for the child Jesus as he grew towards manhood.

Following God might not always be easy. And most of the time, it requires a change in thinking. Being asked to be a foster father and human role model for the Messiah was not a job for which one would normally volunteer. Joseph the husband had to be helpful, caring, sensitive, and dependable.

As protector of his wife and child, he had to endure rejection, accept lodging in a lowly stable, welcome stranger, and live among animals – and that was just the beginning!

Later, Joseph, the family man had to endure fleeing his home country, becoming a refugee, and reestablishing himself in a strange community. He knew what it was like to search for a job and to provide for his family's needs.

We can assume, that being the honorable man he was, Joseph fulfilled the role of earthly father to the best of his ability with all the love any man can have for his son. Joseph was given and fulfilled the role of protector, provider, and teacher, raising the young boy without any further reservation. God provided Joseph with assurance, strength, and the ability of leadership to raise the child who was brought to be Savior.

But the most important thing that we learn from Joseph is that despite all the hardship he faced, he was faithful to the call of God upon his life. After a time, when the danger was over, there appeared to be nothing to keep Joseph in Egypt. But Joseph the patient remained in Egypt without complaint, continuing his work as though he would never leave. He stayed there for no other reason than that of being faithful to the Angel's instruction to remain (Mt. 2:13) “there until I bring thee word.” **He resisted the temptation to get ahead of God's will and timing**, exercising trust and endurance.

Most of the time we get frustrated when God seems to be “taking his time” to answer our prayer. And what do we do? We just go ahead of him, and we just act.

Most of us know how to talk and how to argue to defend our thoughts and positions. We don't see anywhere in the Bible where Joseph even said a word. This is to teach us that the best attitude before God, as disciples of Christ, is to be quiet and listen. St James says “My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry" (James 1: 19). Sometimes, we let our mind, our feelings, our culture get in the way, and we are unable to do the will of God. That's how we end up being disobedient children, instead of being faithful and obedient.

Joseph may not be a preacher, he may not be a gospel writer, but his lifestyle should be for us an inspiration as we engage in the work of evangelism, to win souls for Jesus, and to bring people to church.

May God give us the grace that he had bestowed upon Joseph, so that our example of life may draw and direct people to Jesus.

### **Prayer**

**GRANT, we beseech thee, Almighty God, that the words which we have heard this day with our out- ward ears, may, through thy grace, be so grafted inwardly in our hearts, that they may bring forth in us the fruit of good living, to the honour and praise of thy Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**