

Following a Dream

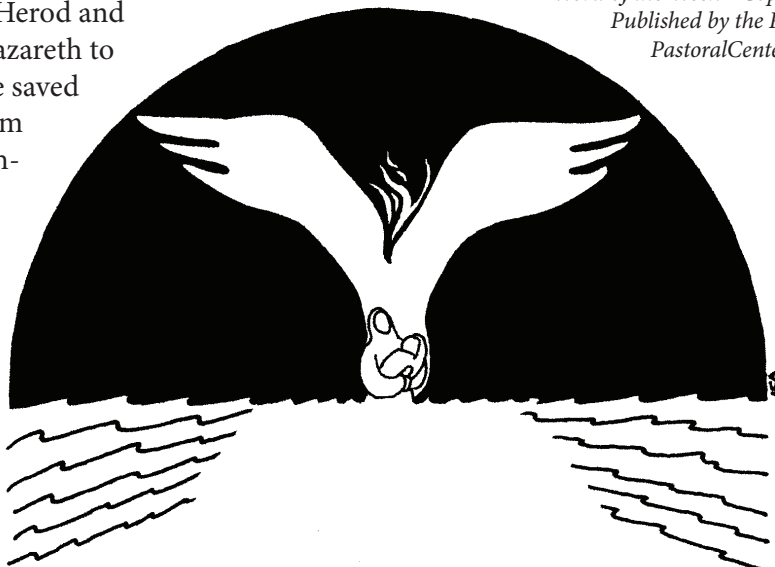
This Week's Readings at Mass

- Isaiah 7:10-14 • Birth of Emmanuel
- Romans 1:1-7 • Greetings from Paul
- Matthew 1:18-24 • The birth of Jesus

We know very little about Jesus' earthly father, Joseph. From these few verses, we see a picture of a sensitive man of great integrity who was willing to change direction in trust when given guidance from God. Just as Mary was asked to take a tremendous leap of faith in saying yes to bearing Jesus, Joseph also was asked to trust in a situation that didn't make rational sense.

According to Jewish tradition, Mary and Joseph were legally married although they were still in their "engagement period." We can imagine his great inner turmoil upon discovering Mary was pregnant but not through him. It would have been a great shame to Joseph, personally and culturally. Legally, he was permitted to have her stoned to death, but he chose the more compassionate route, deciding to divorce her quietly rather than have her publicly humiliated and killed. That way, she would be able to return to the protection of her family to raise the child.

A dream changed everything. Without any guarantees that what he dreamed was real or trustworthy, Joseph woke up and followed the angel's instructions. Then three other times in Jesus' early life Joseph did what he was commanded in a dream, taking Jesus to Egypt to escape Herod and settling in the town of Nazareth to raise him. In doing so, he saved Jesus' life. It took both him and Mary working together and being open to unimagined directions to bring Jesus safely to adulthood.



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"They shall name him Emmanuel, which means God is with us."

Sheepish Question:

Where have I recognized Christ coming into my life this week?

Questions of the Week

- 1 Share a story of a parent you know having the courage to do something that seemed crazy, counter-cultural, or just plain different, but proved to be for the best of his/her child.
- 2 Have you ever had any experiences of receiving directions or guidance from God that made you change course and do something different than what you had planned? How did you know to trust it?

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