

4th Sunday of Advent (Year A)

Gospel

Matthew 1:18–24

Jesus was born of Mary, who was betrothed to Joseph, son of David.

Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to send her away quietly. But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, 'Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.'

All this took place to fulfil what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: 'Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel' — which means, God with us.

When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife.

Reflection

This Gospel shows us the quiet courage of Joseph. He faces a confusing, even shocking situation, and instead of reacting with fear or anger, he listens and trusts God. An angel tells him to step up, to protect Mary and welcome Jesus into his life and he does it, without hesitation.

As Vincentians, we are called to the same kind of courage. Sometimes serving others or standing up for what's right isn't easy. It might be uncomfortable, unexpected, or even misunderstood. But like Joseph, we are invited to trust God, take action, and show love in practical ways.

Materials Needed

- Paper
- Pens

Activity

Give each participant a piece of paper. Ask them to write down a situation in their own life or community where they are called to act with courage or faith— something that feels difficult or uncomfortable.

If using cards, place the “difficult situations” in a pile. Each participant draws one. Ask participants to write down two responses to the situation: one based on fear or hesitation, and one based on trust and courage, like Joseph.

Invite volunteers to share their situations and the two possible responses. Discuss:

- How does fear or hesitation affect us and others?
- What might change if we choose courage and trust, even when it's difficult?

Encourage participants to keep their “courage plan” as a reminder to act with faith and love in the coming week.

Call to Action

Like Joseph, you are invited to step forward with courage and trust, even when the path is unclear or difficult. Look for one small way this week to act with love, protect someone in need, or stand up for what is right. Let your actions reflect God's presence in the world— be a sign of Emmanuel, God with us.

