



The Gospel & Homily † el Evangelio y la Homilía

20 December 2020

Fourth Sunday of Advent - Cuarto Domingo de Adviento

Announcements

We are not meeting for Mass this Sunday. I hope that as you read this you feel the absence of your church family and pray for their safety; and for all those who suffer from sickness. May God protect the faithful.

Let us pray for the departure of this virus that changes how we worship and takes away our closeness; but never alters our love and faith in the Lord.

We pray for our loved ones and so many others in the world.

We are steadfast in the face of this challenge, through the courage and example of Jesus Christ.

- Welcome
- We continue to be absent from our gatherings here at the church. I will have a Mass for you to watch for Christmas Eve. Look for the email with the link to the video Mass sometime after 2:00 on Thursday.

- Here's a note from Carol and Harry...

> Harry and I are thrilled to hopefully be down in your area this summer. My daughter [who lives here in metro Tampa area] is having her first baby in July. We would head down there in June and stay thru August. Thank you again for the Communion and Wine! It sure adds to sharing the Mass with you!

- I don't want this opening to sound like a news program... but I have to mention two very important items of news that happened this week.

A vaccine to prevent the contraction of the coronavirus has arrived and started distribution this week.

The other news is that in the time it took for a vaccine to arrive, more than three hundred thousand Americans and nearly 2 million people worldwide have died. Many more will die from this pandemic before the vaccine is given to the whole world. God bless their souls. Your faith and trust in God will need to be very strong until this is resolved.

- There will be no video Mass for Sunday the 27th of December. I will take Christmas weekend for some personal time.
- During the week of the 28th I will contact each of you to arrange a "front porch" visit to bring you communion to be used in January and February. I want to stop by and say hello; we have not seen each other enough lately.
- I will stay in touch with each of you as we plan our church schedule for the months ahead. Please also visit the website at <https://spcath.org>

Gospel Luke 1:26-38

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God." Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.



Homily

Joseph is a wise man. He becomes engaged to Mary. When it is discovered that she is pregnant he makes the decision to let her go away quietly. They were engaged to marry at that point. When a couple moved in together they became common-law husband and wife, sometimes having a ceremony later. Rabbis or other ministers were not always nearby. This practice continues today in many states, and living together is a testament of common law marriage.

So Joseph has a dilemma. The "living together" part of his relationship to Mary had not occurred yet. Men always had stupid pride, even then, and Mary was pregnant. He said, "not me." So Mary had to go, but quietly.

How come it's never the man's fault when pregnancies occur? ... the guys have no shame to bear? They do the sweet-talking, they leave the seed and the woman is branded as the bad one. Unfair? You bet it is. Too often the guy offers no money for the child's future and says, "Oh... that's your child." And he goes on with his life and has other women and children. If you know a man like that, shake your finger at him.

This pregnancy was not the same as others. It was immaculate. God willed that she should bear the Christ child, and so she did.

Joseph was not the father of this child that Mary was having. Mary was visited by an angel as we heard in the Gospel.

Joseph was also visited by an angel before he took the step to send Mary away. "Joseph, let me tell you this story." It must have been astounding to Joseph; but he was the perfect example of faith and he believed the angel.

I've talked a lot about faith in the last few weeks. Joseph showed a huge amount of faith in what the angel told him. He drew his faith from the writings of a thousand years which proclaimed the coming of Christ.

At some point after speaking with the angel he must have said something like, "Holy cow, I will serve as parent and earthly father of the savior. My wife will bear the Christ child. Yes... I have faith, I will do this."

This is the kind of faith you should have at Christmas, and then try it all year long. People come together over the Christmas break in combinations and in locations where they're not normally together. That may mean family or friends assembling at home or in a holiday place, sometimes after not having seen one another for a long time. These meetings may be happy or they may be tense.

Put that stuff aside. Leave behind your baggage, or bite your tongue, and watch your own behavior. Think of the true meaning of Christmas.

Some things may need to be forgiven and put aside. A desire to always lead the conversation in the group... or your reaction to another who does the same... let these things pass.

Have the kind of faith that Joseph had. God's will is always the path to follow.

I urge you to recognize that all of us, your relatives and friends, are with the Holy Spirit, and Christ is there with us. Try your best to feel the joy and not impede the moments when our hearts are happy as we recognize Christ in our home and in our hearts.



Evangelio Lucas 1:26-38

Y al sexto mes, el ángel Gabriel fue enviado por Dios a una ciudad de Galilea llamada Nazaret, a una virgen desposada con un hombre que se llamaba José, de los descendientes de David; y el nombre de la virgen era María. Y entrando el ángel, le dijo: ¡Salve, muy favorecida! El Señor está contigo; bendita eres tú entre las mujeres. Pero ella se turbó mucho por estas palabras, y se preguntaba qué clase de saludo sería este. Y el ángel le dijo: No temas, María, porque has hallado gracia delante de Dios. Y he aquí, concebirás en tu seno y darás a luz un hijo, y le pondrás por nombre Jesús. Este será grande y será llamado Hijo del Altísimo; y el Señor Dios le dará el trono de su padre David; y reinará sobre la casa de Jacob para siempre, y su reino no tendrá fin. Entonces María dijo al ángel: ¿Cómo será esto, puesto que soy virgen? Respondiendo el ángel, le dijo: El Espíritu Santo vendrá sobre ti, y el poder del Altísimo te cubrirá con su sombra; por eso el santo Niño que nacerá será llamado Hijo de Dios. Y he aquí, tu parienta Elisabet en su vejez también ha concebido un hijo; y este es el sexto mes para ella, la que llamaban estéril. Porque ninguna cosa será imposible para Dios. Entonces María dijo: He aquí la sierva del Señor; hágase conmigo conforme a tu palabra. Y el ángel se fue de su presencia.



Homilía

José es un hombre sabio. Se compromete con María. Cuando se descubre que está embarazada, él toma la decisión de dejarla irse tranquilamente. Estaban comprometidos para casarse en ese momento. Cuando una pareja se iba a vivir juntos, se convertían en marido y mujer en unión libre, y a veces tenían una ceremonia más tarde. Los rabinos u otros ministros no siempre estaban cerca. Esta práctica continúa hoy en muchos estados, y la convivencia es un testimonio del matrimonio de hecho.



Entonces José tiene un dilema. La parte de "vivir juntos" de su relación con Mary aún no se había producido. Los hombres siempre han tenido un orgullo estúpido, incluso entonces, y Mary estaba embarazada. Él dijo, "yo no". Así que María tuvo que irse, pero en silencio.

¿Cómo es que nunca es culpa del hombre cuando ocurren los embarazos? ... los chicos no tienen vergüenza que soportar? Ellos hablan dulcemente, dejan la semilla y la mujer es tildada de mala. ¿Injusto? Por supuesto que sí. Con demasiada frecuencia, el hombre no ofrece dinero para el futuro del niño y dice: "Oh ... ese es tu hijo". Y sigue con su vida y tiene otras mujeres y niños. Si conoces a un hombre así, muévete con el dedo.

Este embarazo no fue igual a otros. Estaba inmaculado. Dios quiso que ella diera a luz al niño Jesús, y así lo hizo.

José no era el padre de este hijo que María estaba teniendo. María fue visitada por un ángel como escuchamos en el Evangelio.

José también fue visitado por un ángel antes de dar el paso para despedir a María. "Joseph, déjame contarte esta historia". Debe haber sido asombroso para Joseph; pero era el ejemplo perfecto de fe y le creía al ángel.

He hablado mucho sobre la fe en las últimas semanas. José mostró una gran fe en lo que le dijo el ángel. Extrajo su fe de los escritos de mil años que proclamaban la venida de Cristo.

En algún momento, después de hablar con el ángel, debe haber dicho algo como: "Santa vaca, seré el padre terrenal del salvador. Mi esposa dará a luz al niño Jesús. Sí ... tengo fe, haré esto".

Este es el tipo de fe que debe tener en Navidad y luego intentarlo durante todo el año. Las personas se reúnen durante las vacaciones de Navidad en combinaciones y en lugares donde normalmente no están juntas. Eso puede significar que la familia o los amigos se reúnan en casa o en un lugar de vacaciones, a veces después de no haberse visto durante mucho tiempo. Estas reuniones pueden ser felices o tensas.

Deja eso a un lado. Deje atrás su equipaje o muerda su lengua y observe su propio comportamiento. Piense en el verdadero significado de la Navidad.

Algunas cosas pueden necesitar ser perdonadas y dejadas de lado. El deseo de liderar siempre la conversación en el grupo ... o tu reacción ante otro que hace lo mismo ... deja pasar estas cosas.

Ten el tipo de fe que tenía José. La voluntad de Dios es siempre el camino a seguir.

Les insto a que reconozcan que todos nosotros, sus familiares y amigos, estamos con el Espíritu Santo y que Cristo está allí con nosotros. Haga todo lo posible por sentir el gozo y no obstaculizar los momentos en que nuestro corazón está feliz al reconocer a Cristo en nuestro hogar y en nuestro corazón.

