

Reflection for Advent 4 Matthew 1.18-25

In today's Gospel Matthew approaches the nativity more from Joseph's angle than Mary's. Having stated his lineage from Abraham through David and onwards he then relates how Joseph is betrothed to Mary who is with child from the Holy Spirit, not by Joseph himself. That is his only reference to the Annunciation. No story of the Angel Gabriel appearing to her; no Magnificat. Matthew instead chooses to show how Joseph is visited by an angel in a dream who tells him not to be afraid (Mary was told that too, wasn't she?) to take Mary as his wife rather than ending the betrothal as he was planning.

Even in today's liberal climate where many people live together without being married, for a man to find his partner pregnant by someone else would more than likely lead to the breakup of the relationship. However we are told that Joseph awoke from his dream and took Mary as his wife as the angel of Lord had commanded him.

The truth is that not only Mary was obedient to the Lord through the message of an angel but also Joseph.

For Jesus, the Messiah, to be born both his earthly mother and father were obedient to God's will.

Phil Baker



Sundays in Advent 18th Dec
Evening prayer at 5pm via Zoom.

Meeting ID: 839 0283 2802

Passcode: 625990

Telephone Numbers:

0131 460 1196. 0203 481 5237. 0203 481 5240.

Web link via the website and email.

NEXT SUNDAY 25.12.2022 Christmas Day

SERVICES: 9.30am Sung Eucharist in the Hall.

READINGS: OT Isaiah 9: 2-7

NT Titus 3: 4-7

GOSPEL Luke 2: 1-20



CONTACT US

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St Thomas, Exeter

18th December 2022

Advent 4

10.30am in the Hall

Today

10.30am Sung Eucharist.

Hymns for today

358 O come, O come, Emmanuel.

136 For Mary, mother of our Lord.

513 Thou didst leave thy throne.

Tuesday 20th December

7.30pm House Group. 'A song of Trust'

See Ian for details.

Wednesday 21st December

10am Holy Communion (BCP)

Thursday 22nd December

No St Thomas Tots.

No Knit & Natter. See notices.

Friday 23rd December

9.30am Morning Prayer.

10am Staff Meeting.



Collect

God our redeemer, who prepared the Blessed Virgin Mary to be the mother of your Son: grant that, as she looked for his coming as our saviour, so we may be ready to greet him when he comes again as our judge; who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen**

Isaiah 7: 10-16

Again the Lord spoke to Ahaz, saying, Ask a sign of the Lord your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven. But Ahaz said, I will not ask, and I will not put the Lord to the test. Then Isaiah said: 'Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals, that you weary my God also? Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel. He shall eat curds and honey by the time he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. For before the child knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land before whose two kings you are in dread will be deserted.

Romans 1: 1-7

Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures, the gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh and was declared to be Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for the sake of his name, including yourselves who are called to belong to Jesus Christ, To all God's beloved in Rome, who are called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Matthew 1: 18-25

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. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. 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. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.' All this took place to fulfil what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: 'Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel', which means, 'God is with us.' When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife, but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus.

Intercessions

Intercessor: Restore us O Lord.

Response: And we shall be saved.

Post Communion

Heavenly Father, who chose the Blessed Virgin Mary to be the mother of the promised saviour: fill us your servants with your grace, that in all things we may embrace your holy will and with her rejoice in your salvation; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

NOTICES

For our services, **mask wearing** is not now compulsory but we would still advise it while infection numbers remain high.

Knit and Natter. There are changes to the dates for December and January. On Thursdays 22nd & 29th December and Thursday 5th January 2023 there are no meetings. Thursday 12th January 2023 onwards at 19 Maple Road as usual. Details from Jenny on 01392 498725.

Community Larder is receiving donations on Tuesdays from 10-11am. On Sundays there will also be an opportunity to bring donations to the 10.30 service.

House Group Weekly during Advent on Zoom. We are looking at the songs sung by Zechariah, the Angels, Mary and Simeon. New people are always welcome; see Ian for zoom details.

Our proposal is to stay in the Hall until Palm Sunday.

There is a **Carols by Candlelight** at the Methodist Church on 18th December at 6.30pm.

In the interests of safety we suggest that people should **not work alone in the Church**.

Food Fight (Food for Sundays) are looking for donations of warm clothing, such as hats, gloves, jackets and socks. They are also happy to receive individual-serving bottles/tetra packs of water or juices. **Volunteers are outside Nat West bank on Sunday mornings from 11am-1pm** so any donations can be dropped off there.

Our Christmas Services are:

24th December Crib Service at 4pm in the Hall

24th December Midnight Mass at 11.30pm in the Church

25th December Christmas Day 9.30am Sung Eucharist in the Hall.

1st January Mary, Mother of God. 10.30am Sung Eucharist.

8th January Epiphany 10.30am Sung Eucharist.

