DAY 7

MATTHEW 1:18–21

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 divorce her 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."

The Incarnation is something we are all supposed to "get" as Christians, but its Truth is profound and sometimes eludes us. If we call ourselves Christians, we are—by definition—follower of the Christ, the Anointed One, Jesus of Nazareth. We accept that He is God's gift to humanity, given for our salvation. We know that the giving of that gift came at Christmastime, but the story is filled with surprises, many of which are contained in the few short verses above.

God's Son, the perfect Lamb of God who would one day take away the sins of the world, was born to unwed parents. His earthly father, Joseph, is a just man. More accurately, he is so just that he cannot see God's plan unfolding before his very eyes. In trying to do the right thing, he misses the thing God has called him to do..

It takes divine intervention to keep him on the path of righteousness—to fulfill His calling as the earthly father to Jesus. Joseph almost "missed the mark" as he was kind enough and merciful enough to divorce Mary quietly for what he perceived as her indiscretion, but he was not attuned to what God was truly doing. Thankfully, despite his misstep, and God's patience, he changed course.

This Advent, may we each be open to hearing rightly and truly the course that we should be following. May we not assume to know the way. May we not be just in our ways, but may we be just in God's ways, and His way alone.

REFLECT

Have there been times when you've moved ahead on your own plans instead of obeying God's will? Do you need to ask for forgiveness for any of those choices? Following His call, how can you join together with God in helping to share the good news of the Gospel?

PRAY

Heavenly Father, speak to my heart and soul. Give me ears to hear and a soft heart to receive your message. Give me feet to swiftly follow your way—and change course if necessary. Help me to see the saving grace of your Son alive and active in these days. Help me to enact the Gospel in word and deed in this Advent season and every day until Jesus' return or you call me home. Amen.