

# Jesus!

Isaiah 9:1-3, 5-6;  
Psalm 96;  
Titus 2:11-14;  
Matthew 1:1-25  
(version from the Vigil Mass)

## Christmas

Such was his intention when, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary your wife into your home. For it is through the holy Spirit that this child has been conceived in her. She will bear a son and you are to name him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: "Behold, the virgin shall be with child and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel," which means "God is with us." When Joseph awoke, he did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took his wife into his home. He had no relations with her until she bore a son, and he named him Jesus.

Plans for our life; goals to be reached; dreams to be realized: everything moves ahead smoothly, as slick as oil, until all of a sudden something turns our plans upside down, causing us to think that perhaps it would be best to place our dreams in a drawer and forget about them. Adults find it easier to set aside personal desires, reasoning that they are childish. And in the end, all the years we spent building, all the hours we spent thinking and planning, prove to be worthless. Joseph was like a lot of other young men: he wanted to get married and have a family. Then he discovered that his bride-to-be was pregnant and in a split second his dream went up in smoke. But Joseph was a discreet person—he didn't want to cause a scene, so he decided to divorce Mary quietly because "he was a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to shame." He also knew what would happen to her if he denounced her publicly. So he accepted "defeat" and returned home without a bride.

Then something even more unsettling happened. Joseph's dream concealed an even bigger one because God himself was dreaming for him and thus the young couple found themselves involved in the divine plan. But a decisive step had to be taken and so Joseph "did as the Lord had commanded him and took his wife into his home." He was told to not be afraid, to trust, because "it is through the holy Spirit that this child has been conceived in her." Sometimes things exceed our expectations because they are bigger than our dreams. God has a plan for each one of us, but it is up to us to take the last—or better, the first—step: trust. "Joseph, do not be afraid!"

You too, reader: do not be afraid! God's dream for you is bigger and more beautiful than yours. If you "wake up" and do what he tells you, Christmas will live in your heart!

*Tomorrow the wickedness of the whole world will be destroyed and over us will reign the Savior of the world.*

*Small yet strong in the love of God, like St. Francis of Assisi, all of us, as Christians, are called to watch over and protect the fragile world in which we live, and all its peoples. We have spoken at length about joy and love, but the word of God also speaks about the fruit of peace (EG 216-217).*

