

December 18th – Nina Lukens – Tuesday of the Third Week of Advent

Today's gospel reminds us of the ability to accept change when God calls us to something new, even if it is not something that we planned or expected. In today's gospel, Mary tells Joseph that she is with child but, since the two are not married, Joseph decides to divorce her in order to protect her from shame. However, the Lord then comes to Joseph in a dream to tell him not to be afraid to accept Mary and the child, and tells Joseph that the child is the fulfillment of "Emmanuel" or "God with us." Joseph then does what God tells him to do, and completely changes his original plan by accepting Mary and her child into his home.

In our lives today, change is often seen as daunting. Specifically, as a college senior, I often find myself anxious about what is to come as I end my time as a student here and begin a new part of my life somewhere else. Faced with multiple and conflicting options, I feel somewhat like Joseph when he was faced with a difficult and life-changing choice. Although our circumstances are different, we both seek to make the right choice with good intentions in mind. However, this gospel also teaches that in times of uncertainty and change, it is important to be open and listen to God's voice so that we might discern what He truly wants for us. Joseph was open to God's call, and in response he accepted exactly what God knew was best for him. In looking forward towards next year, I want to be more like Joseph. To be open to hearing God's voice, even if it is not what I expect to hear, and to let Him guide me to where I truly belong.

Reading 1

Jeremiah 23:5-8

Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD,
when I will raise up a righteous shoot to David;
As king he shall reign and govern wisely,
he shall do what is just and right in the land.
In his days Judah shall be saved,
Israel shall dwell in security.
This is the name they give him:
"The LORD our justice."

Therefore, the days will come, says the LORD,
when they shall no longer say, "As the LORD lives,
who brought the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt";
but rather, "As the LORD lives,
who brought the descendants of the house of Israel
up from the land of the north"—
and from all the lands to which I banished them;
they shall again live on their own land.

Responsorial Psalm

PS 72:1-2, 12-13, 18-19

R. (see 7) Justice shall flourish in his time, and fullness of peace for ever.
O God, with your judgment endow the king,
and with your justice, the king's son;

He shall govern your people with justice
and your afflicted ones with judgment.

R. Justice shall flourish in his time, and fullness of peace for ever.

For he shall rescue the poor when he cries out,
and the afflicted when he has no one to help him.

He shall have pity for the lowly and the poor;
the lives of the poor he shall save.

R. Justice shall flourish in his time, and fullness of peace for ever.

Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel,
who alone does wondrous deeds.

And blessed forever be his glorious name;
may the whole earth be filled with his glory.

R. Justice shall flourish in his time, and fullness of peace for ever.

Gospel

Matthew 1:18-25

This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about.

When his mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph,
but before they lived together,

she was found with child through the Holy Spirit.

Joseph her husband, since he was a righteous man,
yet unwilling to expose her to shame,
decided to divorce her quietly.

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.