

**As we stand just days away from Christmas, the Church asks us to slow down and listen. Advent whispers a simple truth: *the Lord is near.***

**Today the Gospel places us in Joseph's shoes. Imagine his fear. He is righteous and faithful, a man who works with his hands and lives by quiet integrity. Suddenly, his world collapses. Mary is pregnant. The child is not his. Everything he thought his life would be—his plans, his expectations—falls apart. What would you do?**

**This is how God often works: not by fitting into our plans, but by interrupting them.**

**Joseph never speaks in the Gospel. Not one recorded word. But he listens. And in a dream, the angel says, “Do not be afraid. Take Mary into your home.” Trust that God is at work. Joseph wakes up and he obeys. No arguments. No delay. He takes Mary into his home and protects what is fragile.**

**That silence is powerful. Joseph teaches us that faith is not about having everything explained. Faith is about trusting when things don't make sense.**

**The prophet Isaiah speaks of a sign: a child will be born, and his name will be Emmanuel: *God with us*. Not a distant God. Not a God of thunder and spectacle. This is a God who comes close. A God who enters confusion, poverty, and fear.**

**The psalm asks, "Who may stand in God's presence?" Those with clean hands and pure hearts. In other words, those who are honest before God. Advent reminds us that preparation matters. We do not welcome Christ casually. We make room for him.**

**Saint Paul tells us that this child is Jesus Christ our Lord: descended from David, yet Son of God by the power of the Spirit. Fully human. Fully divine.**

**And that changes everything.**

**Joseph's story is not ancient history. It is our story. Many of us come here today carrying uncertainty: a diagnosis, a broken relationship, financial stress, worry about a child or a parent. Like Joseph, we did not choose these circumstances. But like Joseph, we are asked how we will respond.**

**Advent is not passive waiting. It is active trust.**

**In a world demanding instant joy, God gives us a child in a manger. In a season of noise, God speaks in silence. In a culture of control, God asks for surrender.**

**So what do we do in these final days?**

**First, do not be afraid. Bring your fear to prayer. Name it. God is already there.**

**Second, prepare your heart. Go to confession. Let God clean what you cannot fix yourself. Clean hands and pure hearts are not earned; they are received.**

**Third, act in quiet faith. One act of obedience this week. One act of mercy. One moment of silence before the manger or the Eucharist.**

**Joseph teaches us that holiness often looks ordinary: showing up, protecting what is fragile, trusting God enough to say yes without understanding everything.**

**Brothers and sisters, Emmanuel is not an idea. He is a person. He comes to your home, your struggles, your joy, your cross.**

**The Lord is near. Like Joseph, let us take him into our home. Let us welcome him.**