

Ask, Father James:

THE CHRISTMAS STORY UNFOLDING...

In the Fourth Sunday of Advent, we move away from John the Baptist's role and the Christmas story begins to unfold with the tale of an engaged young woman pregnant by the power of the Holy Spirit. (Matthew 1:18-24). Joseph is called "a righteous man." Why? At first, he struggled to believe his fiancé's story. Joseph would eventually discover it was all God's doing. Righteous man that he is, Joseph chooses to open his heart to the angel and from thence on, his faith in God's plan never wavered. He cooperated all the way. They both realized just as we too do today, that this is the fulfillment of the prophecy made in our First reading, Isaiah 7:10-14: "Therefore, the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son and will call him Immanuel" (v.14), meaning "God is with us" - the final and once-and-for-all manifestation of God's presence with us. Note that Isaiah 7:14, pointing to a virgin who will become pregnant, does not name the biological father; speaks of the child as under God's protection and given God's assistance. This is how come Jesus is both fully man and fully God. This revelation to Mary and Joseph is the creed we profess in the Nicene Creed as: "Jesus Christ . . . true God from true God . . . incarnate from the Virgin Mary . . . made man for our sake . . ."



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