

March 20, 2017

2 Samuel 7:4-5, 12-14, 16

Romans 4: 13, 16-18, 22

Matthew 1:16; 18-21

The feast of St. Joseph, Spouse of the Virgin Mary, is a celebration of our heavenly father's love for us as well as the love of our human father in providing and caring for us in our daily needs.

Joseph was betrothed to Mary, who was with child through the Holy Spirit. Joseph was a righteous man and not willing to shame Mary within their community by divorcing her. An angel came to Joseph in a dream to reassure him to take Mary as his wife to bear a son. They were to call this son Jesus, who was being sent to save his people. Can you imagine the faith in God that Joseph had to agree to this unbelievable challenge? This child will change Joseph and Mary's world, as well as that of the entire world around them.

Joseph was from the house of David, and it is proclaimed from this house that a savior will lead his people Israel to the Promised Land and to salvation. This righteousness comes from the faith of Abraham and the faith displayed by Joseph and his commitment to Mary to bring this savior into the world. Could Samuel have imagined that God would send his son in human flesh? This would have been unthinkable even to the most devout prophet. It is through this that God embeds himself with us in this life of Jesus. Our Christian challenge is to love as universally and as unconditionally as Jesus does.

It is this nurturing response and commitment of Joseph to Mary and his family that provides us with a wonderful example of fatherly love and compassion to those we love. No obstacle could be so overwhelming that would deter us from this commitment when we trust in God.

**Reflection questions:**

Can we believe in God, as Joseph did, and undertake the challenges presented to us in our everyday lives?

How can we commit ourselves to the relationships around us to be more open to love one another as Joseph loved Mary and Jesus?

*Reflection by Deacon Michael Prendergast, St. Elizabeth Seton.*