

4th SUNDAY OF ADVENT (A)



Rembrandt: "The Dream of St. Joseph" c. 1650-55

THE GOSPEL Matthew 1:18-24

"This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about."

She conceived
the holy child within her

Because (*Quoting GM Hopkins God's Grandeur*)

"the Holy Ghost
over the
bent world
broods
with warm breast
and with ah! bright wings."

Softly caring, watching,
always at hand,
warming the world
with love.

God among us.
God with us.

Be born for us soon,

THE FIRST READING Isaiah 7:10-14

***The Lord spoke to Ahaz, saying:
ask for a sign from the Lord, your God.***

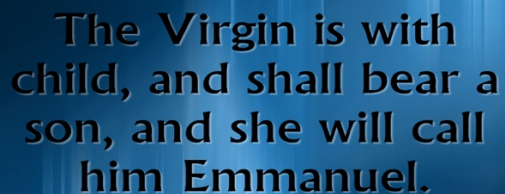
A virgin would conceive and bear a son
who would be called
Emmanuel.

In the beginning

and with us now,
and ever will
be with
us.

Emmanuel.

Lord,
guide us with
your signs that tell us
you are with us
now.



**The Virgin is with
child, and shall bear a
son, and she will call
him Emmanuel.**

THE SECOND READING Romans 1:1-7

***Among whom are you also, who are called to belong to Jesus Christ;
... called to be holy.***

Son of
God, you came
to us from David, into
our flesh, and into our time.
You suffered all that we suffer daily.

We are yours. We belong to you.
Bestow grace upon grace.
Send us, with your love,
to the whole world
and make it holy.



Reflexion: Arriving at the climax of Advent, today's readings show God asking for our love and our trust. They also demonstrate God's faithfulness to us, sending Jesus to save us.

Isaiah is sent to comfort King Ahaz (**First Reading**), who has turned away from God. Isaiah sees through the false humility of Ahaz, but still gives him a sign: a maiden will give birth to a son, Emmanuel – 'God-is-with-us'.

This same prophesy is echoed in the **Gospel**. Joseph also faces a difficult situation, but God speaks through an angel in Joseph's dreams, reassuring him that his son is a gift of the Holy Spirit destined to be the Saviour. Joseph follows the angel's command, placing his whole trust in God.

For us, Jesus is the King of Glory in today's **Psalm**. The earth and all within it belong to the Lord, and all who follow God's ways shall receive a blessing.

St Paul emphasises both the human and divine aspect of Jesus, who is both a descendant of David and the Son of God. It is Jesus alone who can bring us grace and peace.

(Second Reading)

As we continue our Christmas preparations and wait in expectant hope for the Lord's coming, let's pray for the grace that, like Joseph, we might listen with the ear of faith, and respond obediently to the Lord's call.

We pray especially for peace throughout the world. Just as we welcome Jesus into our own hearts, we ask the Lord to help us embrace and welcome all those whom we encounter. (*Outreach from St. Bueno's*)

