

Christmas Homily

INTRODUCTION

People come to church at Christmastime for a wide variety of reasons. Some come every week and embrace Christmas with special fervor. Some come occasionally, some infrequently. Some are here as a favor to family and friends. The good news is that as the angel says "for all people". Whoever you are, for whatever reason you are here, every person in this church has a journey to make over this next year.

For some it will be a difficult medical prognosis. Christmas is for you. For some it may be a journey of difficult financial problems in the coming year. This Christmas is for you.

For some there will be a loss or a personal crisis. Christmas is for you. For some things are going well but as we all know things can change. Christmas is for you.

One of our greatest saints in the Church is St. Augustine, a master of sound bites, "Christ is with us, but we are always with Christ."

We all have a journey to make this coming year. Begin to walk with Jesus, make him a clear part of your life. Make his Gospel, his church, his sacraments part of your life.

Begin this closer walk with Christ by trying to appreciate God's love and presence in your life. Start with the baby and all

that means This baby is unique precisely because he is like a million other babies—He has his Father's eyes. AMEN.

Fourth Sunday of Advent

THEME: JOSEPH

INTRODUCTION

The Gospel reading for today the fourth and last Sunday in Advent focuses on the forgotten person of the Nativity St. Joseph.

The background to days reading might little bewildering to us with all the talk about engagement betrothal and divorce .It was a very different cultural world from ours. Evidently people in those days married in stages.

The first stage was the engagement. This happened when a boy and girl were very young and it was done by their families. The second stage was the betrothal. Here is where a couple accepted and ratified the engagement their parents had made.They could leave before the engagement, but to separate after the engagement required a formal legal procedure . A year later came the

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solemn marriage, which was final. Joseph and Mary were at the middle stage where Joseph is told not to fear about taking Mary as his wife. That is the background of today's GOSPEL READING.

Joseph was a man of commitment. He truly loved Mary and Jesus. We are known by our commitments. It has been said that that our character is revealed not by the number of options we leave open in our lives but by the commitments we embrace. AMEN.