

## Anticipation

Thursday

“God’s Will”

*Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: when His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit. And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man and not wanting to disgrace her, planned to send her away secretly. But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for the Child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit." When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. (Matthew 1:18-20, 24)*

“Thy Will, Not My Will”...spiritual guidance handed down through generations to remind us to use our gift of free will mindfully in service to God’s Will rather than our own. Matthew’s passage describing the events of Advent is an excellent example of this. Knowing what was on Joseph’s heart and mind, God’s messenger shared with him the truth of Mary’s conception and His desire that Joseph follow through with the marriage. Joseph then had an informed choice to make: follow God’s Will or his own.

While Scripture does not provide a window into Joseph’s decision-making process, it is clear that Joseph chose to follow God’s Will. This may have been easy or it may have been difficult, but in either case, what mattered was that in the end Joseph put his trust in God rather than succumb to the cultural norms or religious rules of the times. Just as importantly, God put His trust in Joseph to honorably and responsibly co-parent His son Jesus.

**Dear Lord, as we prepare to welcome your Son Jesus into the world, help us to deepen our abilities to receive divine guidance and discern spiritual direction. Grant us the capability to differentiate Thy Will from the longings of our own and the courage to make the divine choice.**

Practice: As you consider Joseph’s leap of faith to follow God’s direction based upon a dream, take a few minutes and put on Joseph’s shoes as he traveled to Bethlehem with Mary. If you were him, what would you be thinking, feeling, anticipating as he and Mary approached the impending birth? Consider those times in your own life, past or present, where God asked you to make a choice between His Will and your own? Thank God for His presence and trust in you and your service in His Kingdom.