

4th Sunday of Advent (A)
December 21, 2025
“Joseph”

Who was Saint Joseph? He is known as the husband of Mary, the foster-father of Jesus, and the model of workers. He is also the patron of the Church. These are things that most of us know about Saint Joseph.

But there are other features of his life that can teach, guide, and inspire us in the days leading up to Christmas. What are these other features?

Joseph was **a prudent steward**. Saint Matthew recounts Joseph hearing earth-shattering news: His bride-to-be was with child, a child not his. You can imagine how you would react if your fiancé announced that she was going to carry someone else’s baby. Anguish and confusion are an understatement. Joseph knew that if he reported this incident, the authorities would condemn Mary, as the Law directed, *“[If a woman commits fornication], they shall bring the young woman to the entrance of her father’s house, and there the men of her town shall stone her to death”* (Deut. 22:21).

Joseph loved Our Lady, and did not want her to suffer in this way, so he decided to quietly separate from her. But God had other plans. He revealed his will in a dream to Joseph, and this thoughtful, discerning man accepted God’s will. Like a good steward, Joseph would care for and support his wife and son, managing his household with the resources God gave him in accordance with God’s plan.

Joseph was also **a silent witness**. You will notice that there are NO recorded words of Joseph in Scripture. He never says a thing. This was for two reasons: (1) his actions spoke for him. Joseph’s actions reveal him to be a dutiful, caring, faithful,

loving, and devoted husband and father. His life was committed to caring for Mary and Jesus. In the Gospel, when told of God's plan, he gets up, takes Our Lady into his home, helps bring Christ into the world, protects him, and raises him as a carpenter's son. He also assisted in the religious duties imposed on all Jews, such as the dedication in the Temple and the Passover feasts; (2) Joseph is silent because he is NOT the natural father of Jesus. Only the *natural* Father, God, speaks for Christ, as He did at Our Lord's Baptism and at the Transfiguration, when he said, "*This is my beloved Son*" (Mt. 3:17, 17:5). Since God alone speaks as Father, there is no confusion about who Our Lord's natural Father is.

Finally, Joseph is a **model of obedient faith**. In the Gospel, he intends to do what he thinks is right when he hears that Mary is pregnant. But Joseph's will is not God's will, and when he wakes up, he does as God directs by proceeding with the wedding. That is the mark of any good father: doing the heavenly Father's will as he discerns it. Faith without obedient follow-through is useless, like dust on a floor or a vapor in the air. So there is Joseph: prudent steward, silent witness, and model of obedient faith.

As we approach Christmas, let us go to Joseph by being good stewards of our gifts, quietly witnessing to Christ, and living our faith by obeying our Father. If we live this way, the blessings of salvation will come to us who have persevered in our Christian vocation. And despite suffering, setback, and fall, when we leave this world, we can confidently expect to hear the words that Joseph heard on his arrival in heaven, "*Well done, good and faithful servant. Come, share your master's joy*" (Mt. 25:21).

We will see you at Christmas. God bless you.