

Joseph's Choice

The infancy narrative in Matthew's Gospel presents a huge dilemma. Mary was betrothed to Joseph: according to Jewish custom, betrothal was the first part of the marriage, constituting a man and woman as husband and wife; it was followed usually a year later by the nuptial, wherein the husband takes his wife into his home, and the marriage is consummated. Because the betrothal was a legally binding commitment, infidelity after betrothal was considered adultery.

Mary was found with child during the period of her betrothal to Joseph. This presented a very difficult situation between Mary and Joseph, as well as to their relatives; Joseph intended to quietly end his betrothal to Mary through a divorce. As Joseph continued to wrestle with the dilemma, an angel appeared to him in a dream, saying: "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary your wife into your home. For it is through the Holy Spirit that this child has been conceived in her. She will bear a son and you are to name Him Jesus, because He will save His people from their sins." (Mt 1:20-21). That revelation must have been quite a shock to Joseph; but when Joseph woke, he did what the angel of the Lord commanded and took Mary into his home.

When faced with what seemed like a life-shattering betrayal, Joseph chose to protect Mary by not shaming her in public. Joseph's choice teaches us powerful lessons in faith, obedience and courage. While we can't always control what happens to us in life, we can choose how we respond to them. Joseph responded with faith by believing the unbelievable – he trusted what the angel said and believed that Mary's pregnancy was by the Holy Spirit. It was highly probable that many of Joseph's relatives may have advised him to get on with his own life by publicly exposing Mary, let her face the consequences and find another wife. Yet, Joseph chose to have faith in God's message, rather than the opinions and advice of men. If we find ourselves in difficult situations, would we choose to trust the word of God or worldly wisdom?

Joseph also chose to be obedient to God's command to take Mary as his wife, rather than the easy way out. Many times, it is not easy to obey God's commandments and what the Church teaches. It is not easy to do the right thing because of what other people might say to us and about us. In trying to please others, we fail to please God.



Joseph chose to trust God's word and obey it. In doing so, he found courage — while Joseph was anxious of what people might say and how they would react, he stuck to his decision to do as God had said, and God gave him courage in the midst of that uncertainty. In life, things will happen that causes fear and anxiety, but we can trust God to carry us through them just as Joseph did.

Joseph's plan to divorce Mary was overcome by his faith and obedience to God's word, and he took Mary into his home and adopted the child in Mary's womb as his own. Thus, Joseph became an important instrument of God's design not only in the birth of the Messiah, but also in the early years of His upbringing.

The Old Testament prophecies say that the Messiah would come from David's line, notably in Isaiah 9:6-7 (a ruler on David's throne), Jeremiah 23:5 and

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33:15-16 (from David's lineage), and Micah 5:1-2 (from Bethlehem, David's town). This prophecy was rooted in God's covenant with King David (2 Samuel 7); it established the expectation that the Messiah would be a descendant of King David, thus fulfilling the royal lineage. The Gospels give us two genealogies of Jesus Christ. The genealogy in Matthew traces the generational line through Joseph, the foster father of Jesus, while the genealogy in Luke traces the line through Mary, the mother of Jesus. Despite some differences, both genealogies prove that Jesus was a descendant of King David, a key element of the Messianic fulfillment: biologically through Mary, who was of the Davidic line through David's son Nathan, and legally through Joseph, who was of the Davidic line through David's son Solomon.

PARISH ANNOUNCEMENTS

Attention children and parents: We will have our rehearsal for the Christmas Pageant today!

Mass at Midnight on December 24 will begin at 11:30pm. Mass on Christmas Day and Sunday School Christmas Pageant will begin at 10:30am. Mass will be followed by Potluck, Santa Claus, Christmas Program and raffle.

Attention parents and gift-givers! Please remember to bring your Christmas gifts on Christmas Day and place them under the Christmas tree in the social hall. This way, Santa Claus will have your gifts ready to give away!

The 2026 Chinese liturgical calendars are now available for \$5 a copy. Please pick a copy for your home and give a copy to a friend or relative.



The 10th year anniversary of the dedication of our church will be on November 19, 2027. We would like all church members to have their picture taken for the 10th year anniversary commemorative parish book. Please sign up with Tommy Puk.

Prayer List: Xie Yannong, Bian Meiyl, Chen Kun, Chen Shupeng, Ni Yufang, Lydia Chen, David Wang, Chen Jianxin, Liang Chenjing and Xu Taicheng.

Mass Schedule	Confessions	Bible Study
Sundays 10:30 AM (Chinese)	Sundays 9:00-9:30 AM	Wednesdays 10:00 AM (Chinese)
Sundays 2:00 PM (English)	Tuesdays 2:00-3:00 PM	Mondays 6:00 PM (English)
	By Appointment	
Mondays 12:00 PM (English)		Eucharistic Adoration
Tuesdays 12:00 PM (English)	Anointing of the Sick	Sundays 9:30 AM to 12:00 PM
Wednesdays 12:00 PM (Chinese)	First Sundays after 10:30 AM Mass	Tuesdays 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM
Fridays 12:00 PM (English)		
First Friday 7:00 PM (English)		
First Saturday 10:00 AM (Chinese)		