

Model of Faithfulness St. Joseph, Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary Tuesday, March 19, 2019 2 Sm 7:4-5a, 12-14a, 16; Rom 4:13, 16-18, 22; **Mt 1:16, 18-21, 24a** (In many ways God continues to speak to everyone.)

“Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary your wife into your home.”

Joseph is a very interesting figure; there’s almost nothing about him except what I just read in Scripture, and yet **he was very important in the working out of God’s plan**. The name Jesus, by the way, in Hebrew really means “Yahweh saves.” So Yahweh is the name given to the God who appeared to the Hebrews like a man in ancient times: Abraham in the heat of the day, Jacob during the whole night wrestling with him, and so on. So now **this Yahweh comes in the flesh and he needs care and guidance**, because he is fully human, and human beings need nurturing and care and guidance. **Joseph is the one God chose**; that itself says a great deal about him.

Now **Joseph and Mary both were what were called in Hebrew *anawim***. *Anawim* literally means “the poor,” but it has a very special meaning, because they were those who **remained faithful to God in spite of the lack of any sort of status**. They had no status in society; they were on the bottom. They did not have wealth. They did not have power, and they most certainly did not have fame, nor did they seek it. That is why Mary’s Magnificat is the work of real irony, because Mary and Joseph together never sought any fame, **and yet “all generations will call me blessed.” This is God’s work, not theirs, as they recognized.**

So Joseph remains a very fine model for what it means to be faithful to God and to serve God with no particular status or recompense or acknowledgment. In fact if you think about it, the whole way in which Jesus came into the world was a great secret. To the world, Jesus looked like an illegitimate son, and was accused of being so by many people, certainly the Pharisees in his adult life, probably all kinds of kids in his child life. Only Mary and Joseph knew, but they only knew because the Lord had chosen them and **sent an angel to inform them of what was going on**. In this case, **Joseph listened to a dream**. Well, when angels speak, whether it’s in a dream or not, it is something quite extraordinary. But the fact that he believed and he did it is a great credit, because **in many ways God continues to speak to everyone**. There are all kinds of angelic messages we ignore or deflect during our day. There are all kinds of dreams that we just forget when we wake up. Thank goodness Joseph did not.