

**December 21-22, 2019**

**Fourth Sunday of Advent**

**Isaiah 7:10-14**

**Romans 1:1-7**

**Matthew 1:18-24**

LAX is a mess, John Wayne is equally congested. Inclement weather has disrupted arrivals and departures all over the map. Last minute trips to Nordie's, Kohl's or Target are met with congested aisles and lengthy check-out-waits while the Costco parking lot would test the calm of even the holiest of saints. How WONDERFULLY similar to the disarray of the Holy Family mentioned in today's Gospel. Having discovered the unexpected news that Mary was pregnant with a child not of his making, Joseph was rightfully indignant, tormented and ready to end his plans to marry her. Feeling shamed by what appeared to be Mary's 'indecent behavior', Joseph could legally have had her taken to the city gates and be stoned to death by the townsfolk. Still, even though he was emotionally a wreck, Joseph loved Mary enough to forgo having her killed, rather, his plans were to divorce and separate from her, QUIETLY. Of course, as the Gospel of Matthew shares, 'the angel of the Lord' intervened and quieted Joseph's inner turmoil... thus the Incarnation (God Becoming Human) could proceed to its fullness. In these final hours of preparation for what many of us are striving to make a PERFECT EVENT, it is important to remember the wise words: 'There is nowhere where the grace of God is not...nothing exists outside the grace of God.' Turmoil, be it personal, familial or communal does NOT denote an absence of God or his grace, rather it allures us to look at situations/circumstances more closely, to grow in trust, to wait with patience, to open ourselves to new ideas/new concepts, to think outside of our own perceptions and humbly accept that we PARTICIPATE with God's creation...we are NOT the masters we erroneously we are of our own lives. Be it running out of wrapping paper, scotch tape, needing supplies from the market, the children suddenly becoming feverish and ill, or dire news from our friends and family...GOD IS PRESENT within it all. An embrace of Jesus within our hearts does not mean we will be protected from the travails of life...rather...our relationship with Jesus ensures we will not face our travails alone. Our SCRIPTURAL stage is set, all the principal players are prepped for the story to unfold...the Wonder-Counselor, God-Hero, Father-Forever, Prince of Peace, waits in the wings...we need only open our hearts.

With all four candles alight on our Advent Wreath, THANK YOU for journeying with our Santa Clara community as we arrive at the cusp of Christmas. **A reminder, there is NO 8:30 MORNING MASS on TUESDAY, December 24th (Christmas Eve) but our celebration of Christmas commences on Tuesday afternoon with Masses at 4pm, 6:30pm and 9pm. On Wednesday, December 25<sup>th</sup> (Christmas Day), there is a SINGLE MASS at 10am.** *Overflow parking will be available on the dirt field as well as on the street.* The Bulletin has other news of upcoming events, please take one with you as you depart. With the usual expectation of so many of our extended family and friends joining us for our Christmas Eve/Day Masses...DESPITE THE CROWDS... please come with friendly smiles, JOY in your heart, willingness to forgo your preferred seat and ample patience by which to show our visitors and weekly participants our Santa Clara spirit of inclusion, welcome and hospitality...all the while remembering that YOU ARE LOVED! Merry and Blessed Christmas. FKB