

Pastoral Reflection

4th Sunday of Advent – December 18, 2022

In Matthew's Infancy narrative Joseph has four dreams. The first one is in today's Gospel. He is about to divorce Mary "quietly" when the angel of the Lord appeared in a dream and tells him not to be afraid to take Mary into his home. The second dream is in Mt.2:13ff where, during his sleep, he receives a message to flee Bethlehem for Egypt. The third one is in Mt. 2:19ff. Here he dreams that it is time to leave Egypt and return. The final dream is in Mt.2:22ff. During this one he is warned not to return to Judea but instead to head to the region of Galilee. Heavy stuff! This guy had some pretty wild dreams.

In our day and age we approach dreams from a psychological point of view. In the ancient world dreams were often viewed as means of divine communication. Joseph's dreams are messages as to how he was to cooperate in the work of salvation by guarding and protecting the child and his mother. Hence Joseph is called "man of dreams" which is a title that had previously been given to his namesake, the patriarch Joseph.

Have you had any dreams lately? When our lives seem like a nightmare we can't forget to dream! It is not that dreams alone can save us but they can spur us on. They help us to image a future filled with a better life. If we can dream it then we can start to fulfill it. Remember Martin Luther King's famous "Dream Speech". That dream has animated millions to seek a world where color doesn't matter. What's your best dream? Have you shared it? Can we dream together here at St. Cronan, dream of an even more exciting community, dream of an even better approach to justice etc. Come on dreamers. Let's allow God to bring us dreams that help us "cooperate in the work of salvation" like Joseph did!

Be safe and be blessed,

Fr. Jack (he/him)