

**Homily for Fourth Sunday of Advent
December 23, 2017**

by Rev. Enrique Granados
Parochial Vicar
St. Paul the Apostle Catholic Church
Memphis, Tennessee

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

In this last week of Advent (only this Sunday in 2017), the Word of God prepares us to celebrate with joy the birth of the Savior. We have been reflecting on the mystery of the Incarnation for the last three weeks, which is not easy to understand, but it is important to understand the Divine Mystery.

Recall the four important figures:

The first is Isaiah: the prophet of the ages, who gives the exact signs to recognize the Savior, Emmanuel (God with us).

The second figure is John the Baptist: the prophet unites the two testaments and points to the Lamb of God among us.

The third figure is Mary: a simple and humble woman, who accepts with faith the message of the angel Gabriel.

The fourth and last figure is Joseph: a chaste, generous and prudent man of the lineage of King David to whom God gave the promise of the eternal kingdom.

St. Joseph, the adoptive father of Jesus, is the key in the fulfillment of the promise. Perhaps in the gospel narrative that we hear today, there is not much information about St. Joseph, but in the few lines that mentions him, there is all the richness of his person. Who has a devotion to St. Joseph? Who has an image of St. Joseph at home? How many times have we asked for the intercession of St. Joseph?

I remember that Pope Francis had next to his bed the image of St. Joseph, lying down, in deep sleep. St. Joseph is the obedient, humble, prudent, generous, and just man. That is why we always ask for his intercession, for so many virtues that spring from his person. Therefore, St. Joseph is not only the means by which Jesus is born, but is of the lineage of King David. Double condition for the fulfillment of the promise!

We are just a few hours away from celebrating the birth of Jesus, the time has come and there is no more need to keep looking for signs, all of them and the necessary ones.

Now is the time for us, to contemplate on the image of St. Joseph, his love and dedication. Then we will become alive and present in the mystery of the Incarnation in our hearts, fighting for the common good, defending the most vulnerable and defenseless — unborn children and the elderly. We cannot celebrate Christmas without St. Joseph, the Virgin Mary or the Child Jesus. We cannot celebrate a Christmas with a conscience full of indifference, sin, hatred, resentment, division, family problems, marital problems,

abuse, racism, violence, and marginalization. Even with a dirty conscience, we cannot even sleep and we have even fewer dreams.

We are going to continue this Holy Mass and ask for the intercession of St. Joseph, to help us too, so that with faith and love we can receive Jesus, but also commit ourselves to be good Christians, good sons and daughters of God, that we attain to be prudent and fair.

Through the intercession of St. Joseph, the church continues to announce Jesus throughout the world and there are many people who know him and receive him in his heart. Amen.