

CHALLENGING GOOD NEWS:

We complain about media most of the time due to the news they give! They seem to bring to our attention only **Bad news**. Big part of the stories are mostly about **crimes,greedy,terrorism,war,brutality,horrific famine and the latest threat to the world peace! Are these good news?** Are they not depressing thus causing **emotional imbalance,panic,fear,stress and worries**. They keep us on the edge.

In our gospel reading today we are confronted by two important personalities in the history of our salvation who are facing such situation of **challenging, shocking, disturbing and worrying news**. These were in the persons of Mary and Joseph the parents of Jesus.

After the **Annunciation**, Mary must have become so confused and disturbed with the message from the Angel Gabriel about the birth of the Child Jesus though already she was betrothed to this good respectable gentleman Joseph. They were engaged but not living together. Imagine the news to her that she will get child yet she doesn't **know any man. How is she going to break the news to her fiancé whom they have never had any sexual relationship?** Was this supposed to be good news really. How will her parents take her? will any body take her seriously? will people be convinced? Might this be the reason she took off from Galilee to the hill country of Judea to her kinswoman Elizabeth?

It is very typical for some cultures especially in Africa for a young lady when she conceives outside wedlock which is very common of late, to escape to her Auntie or grandmother to seek refuge and escape from the vengeance, anger and blasts from her parents. The grandmother would understand her and have **compassion and support in such situation**. Was Mary in such situation and looking for **support, advice** and encouragement and perhaps under fear of the society which demanded such character **be put to death**. She must have had a lot of anxieties and needed someone to share and understand her.

On the other hand it must have been **devastating news to Joseph**, to learn that Mary was expectant and he was not responsible. The normal circumstances was to **break the relationship and the engagement which he attempted**. He was a straight forward committed and respected person and he didn't want to victimize Mary, he made plans to **divorce her in secret (Mt. 1:19)**, he truly loved her hence didn't want to subject her to the demeaning public divorce process.

It was only after the Angel appeared to him in a dream and told him **do not be afraid to take Mary your wife, she has conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit (Mt. 1:20), she will bear a son and you must name Him JESUS** (Yahweh saves) (Mt. 1:21) He will save his people from sins. This was to fulfill the prophecy of Isaiah ***the virgin will conceive and bear a son, and he will be called Emmanuel which means God with us.*** What a wonderful news now! are these not good news for us?.

Joseph took Mary as his wife and took care of her and till Jesus was born thus taking full **commitment and responsibility over our savior**. This had turned to be good news of salvation knowing the fact that ***God is with us and Jesus further promised us that BEHOLD I WILL BE WITH YOU ALWAYS TILL THE END OF TIME.*** Is he not with us in his word, in works of mercy and in sacraments especially Eucharist! Let this last Sunday of Advent be a proper preparation for Emmanuel in all of us and let us be committed like Joseph.

COME LORD JESUS: