Dreaming with One’s Feet on the Ground

St. Matthew traces the genealogy of Jesus, the Messiah, from Abraham to Joseph. He breaks the formula “became the father of” to show that Jesus is not born of Joseph but through the Holy Spirit. Matthew then relates how the birth of Jesus came about. In Nazareth, the young Mary is betrothed to the local carpenter, Joseph. But before they could live together, Mary is found with child. It is by the Holy Spirit, but this is unknown to everyone. From Luke, we know that Mary has been visited by the angel and told that she would fulfill a prophecy: and as a literal virgin she would give birth to God’s Son, the Savior of the world.

This story that is “ancient but ever new” has been given a beautiful version in the film *The Nativity* by the director Catherine Hardwicke. Here, Joseph struggles to believe Mary’s seemingly outlandish story that an angel has visited her. Moreover, Mary’s pregnancy will earn her the scorn of the community.

In the film, Joseph dreams that Mary is about to be stoned for adultery; he is told to cast the first stone. But suddenly, the angel appears to Joseph in a dream and is told that it is by the Holy Spirit that the Child is conceived in her. Joseph tells Mary about his dream and the two of them set out on a long and arduous journey to Bethlehem for the census. The movie delineates the reactions of both Mary and Joseph to the dumbfounding turn of events in their ordinary lives. Can we imagine a Jewish girl at that time being told that she is to bear the Messiah, while the young Joseph (not an old man as he is usually depicted to be) is torn between his love for Mary and his obedience to the Law of Moses? Joseph is a “righteous man,” i.e., he abides by the Law. Here we see the very human sides of Mary and Joseph and the difficulties they encounter while preparing a monumental event in human history: the birth of the Savior.

The third day of *Simbang Gabi* focuses on Joseph: silent, righteous, and reliable. We often refer to him as the “dreamer,” not unlike the patriarch Joseph, the “lord of dreams.” Pope Francis, however, clarifies this monicker. In his homily at Casa Santa Marta on December 18 last year, the Pope explored St. Joseph’s capacity to dream, saying the saint was a practical man but kept his heart open like “a man of dreams” and not like “a dreamer.” He explained that Joseph “wasn’t abstract. A dreamer is something different. It’s someone who believes… goes off… has his head in the clouds, and doesn’t have his feet on the ground. Joseph had his feet on the ground. But he was open-minded.”

How did Joseph show his open-mindedness and practicality? The Pope explained that when Joseph first faced something he did not understand, “he preferred to step back” but “God revealed to him his mission.” So St. Joseph took up his new role wholeheartedly, and helped raise the Son of God, “in silence, without judging, without speaking poorly of others, and without gossiping…” He helped him grow and develop. So he looked for a place for the child to be born. He looked after him, helped him grow, and taught him to work: many things…in silence. He never took possession of the child for himself. He silently let him grow.”

Following the example of Joseph, may parents have the wise attitude of caring for their children without overbearing. Isn’t it that God has the same attitude toward us his children? He waits, even in silence, for us to mature and turn to him with mature and open hearts.

Fr. Gil Alinsangan, SSP
THE INTRODUCTORY RITES

Entrance Antiphon
(Recited when there is no opening song)

Christ our King is coming, he
is the Lamb foretold by John.

Greeting
(The sign of the cross is made here)

P — The Lord be with you.
All — And with your spirit.

Introduction
(May be read using these or other similar words)

P — On this third day of our
Misa de Gallo, the angel
Gabriel reveals to Joseph
the mystery behind Mary’s
conception, which earlier
caused him a severe crisis.
We admire Joseph for his
attentiveness and docility
to the voice of God. After
receiving the message of the
angel, Joseph does everything
the Lord wants him to do:
he takes Mary and her Child
under his care.

Penitential Act

P — Brethren (brothers and
sisters), let us acknowledge
our sins, and so prepare
ourselves to celebrate the
sacred mysteries. (Pause)

P — Have mercy on us, O
Lord.
All — For we have sinned
against you.

P — Show us, O Lord, your
mercy.
All — And grant us your
salvation.

P — May almighty God
have mercy on us, forgive
us our sins, and bring us to
everlasting life.
All — Amen.

P — Lord, have mercy.
All — Lord, have mercy.

P — Christ, have mercy.
All — Christ, have mercy.

P — Lord, have mercy.
All — Lord, have mercy.

Gloria

All — Gloria to God in the
highest, and on earth peace
to people of good will. We

praise you, we bless you, we
adore you, we glorify you, we
give you thanks for your great
glory, Lord God, heavenly King.
O God, almighty Father. Lord
Jesus Christ, Only Begotten
Son, Lord God, Lamb of God,
Son of the Father, you take
away the sins of the world,
have mercy on you; you take
away the sins of the world,
receive our prayer; you are
seated at the right hand of the
Father, have mercy on us. For
you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord, you
alone are the Most High, Jesus
Christ, with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.

Collect

P — Let us pray. (Pause)

All-powerful God, we are
oppressed and weighed down
by the ancient yoke of sin.
Grant that the birth of your
only Son, so long awaited,
yet always new, may deliver us
and set us free.

We ask this through our
Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God for ever and ever.
All — Amen.

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

First Reading [Jer 23:5–8]

Jeremiah prophesies the birth
of a king, a descendant of
David, which will usher in new
hope and new life for the
people.

A reading from the Book of
the prophet Jeremiah

BEHOLD, the days are coming,
says the Lord, when I will raise
up a righteous shoot to David;
as king he shall reign and
govern wisely, he shall do what
is just and right in the land. In
his days Judah shall be saved,
Israel shall dwell in security.
This is the name they give him:
The Lord our justice.

Therefore, the days will
come, says the Lord, when
they shall no longer say, “As
the Lord lives, who brought
the children of Israel out of the
land of Egypt”; but rather, “As
the Lord lives, who brought
the descendants of the house
of Israel up from the land of
the north” — and from all the
lands to which I banished
them; they shall again live on
their own land.

— The word of the Lord.
All — Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm (Ps 72)

R — Justice shall flourish
in his time, and fullness of peace
for ever.

G

G

and fullness of peace for e-ver.

1. O God, with your judgment
endow the king,/ and with your
justice, the king’s son;/ he shall
гovern your people with
justice/ and your afflicted ones
with judgment. (R)

2. For he shall rescue the poor
when he cries out,/ and the
afflicted when he has no one
to help him./ He shall have pity
for the lowly and the poor;/ the
lives of the poor he shall
save. (R)

3. Blessed be the Lord, the
God of Israel,/ who alone
does wondrous deeds./ And
blessed forever be his glorious
name:/ may the whole earth
be filled with his glory. (R)

Alleluia (Stand)

All — Alleluia, alleluia. O
Leader of the House of Israel,
giver of the Law to Moses on
Sinai: come to rescue us with
your mighty power! Alleluia,
alleluia.

Gospel (Mt 1:18–25)

P — A reading from the holy
Gospel according to Matthew
All — Glory to you, O Lord.

THIS is how the birth of Jesus
Christ came about. When his
mother Mary was betrothed
to Joseph, but before they
lived together, she was found
with child through the Holy Spirit. Joseph her husband, since he was a righteous man, yet unwilling to expose her to shame, decided to divorce her quietly. Such was his intention when, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary your wife into your home. For it is through the Holy Spirit that this child has been conceived in her. She will bear a son and you are to name him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.”

All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: Behold, the virgin shall be with child and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel, which means “God is with us.” When Joseph awoke, he did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took his wife into his home. He had no relations with her until she bore a son, and he named him Jesus.

— The Gospel of the Lord.
All — Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Homily (Sit)

Prayer of the Faithful (Stand)

P — As we bring our prayers to our heavenly Father, let us pray especially for fathers that they may mirror God’s love here on earth. We confidently pray:

R — Lord, hear our prayer.

C — That our Holy Father Pope Francis, our bishops, priests, deacons, consecrated persons, and lay leaders may, like St. Joseph, mirror your love by their fatherly care of your people, their spiritual children, we pray: (R)

C — That government officials and civil leaders may be sensitive and discerning of God’s plan as it unfolds in the events of our national life, we pray: (R)

C — That fathers working abroad or far from home may remain faithful to their families and be filled with the consolation of St. Joseph as they celebrate Christmas away from their loved ones, we pray: (R)

C — That those who are undergoing crises in their personal and family lives may have the faith and hope of St. Joseph who sought to see God’s will in unexpected and even painful realities, we pray: (R)

C — That as we continue to face the difficult economic, social, and political realities of our nation, we may hold on to the virtue of hope which does not disappoint, we pray: (R)

C — Let us pray for the urgent concerns of our community and our personal intentions (pause), we pray: (R)

P — Fill us with your Spirit, O Lord. Teach us to do your will that we may become united as one family under your fatherhood. You who live and reign for ever and ever.
All — Amen.

Presentation of the Gifts (Stand)

P — Pray, brethren.
All — May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands for the praise and glory of his name, for our good and the good of all his holy Church.

Prayer over the Offerings

P — O Lord, let the sacrifice to be offered to your name make us acceptable to you, that we may share in the immortal life of your Son, who healed our mortal nature by his death.
Grant this through Jesus Christ our Lord.
All — Amen.

Preface (Advent II)

P — The Lord be with you.
All — And with your spirit.

P — Lift up your hearts.
All — We lift them up to the Lord.

P — Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
All — It is right and just.

P — It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere to give you thanks, Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God, through Christ our Lord.

For all the oracles of the prophets foretold him, the Virgin Mother longed for him with love beyond all telling. John the Baptist sang of his coming and proclaimed his presence when he came.

It is by his gift that already we rejoice at the mystery of his Nativity, so that he may find us watchful in prayer and exultant in his praise.

And so, with Angels and Archangels, with Thrones and Dominions, and with all the hosts and Powers of heaven, we sing the hymn of your glory, as without end we acclaim:

All — Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts. Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest. (Kneel)

Acclamation
All — Save us, Savior of the world, for by your Cross and Resurrection you have set us free.

The Lord’s Prayer
All — Our Father...
P — Deliver us, Lord...
All — For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and for ever.

Invitation to Peace
Invitation to Communion (Kneel)

P — Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.
All — Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.

Communion Antiphon (Mt 1:23)

His name will be called Emmanuel, which means God-with-us.
Prayer after Communion (Stand)

P — Let us pray. (Pause)

In this gathering of your Church, the living temple of your presence, may we find in your mercy, Lord, and so approach with fitting reverence the coming feast of our redemption.

Grant this in the name of Jesus our Lord.
All — Amen.

THE CONCLUDING RITES

P — The Lord be with you.
All — And with your spirit.

Solemn Blessing

P — Bow down for the blessing. (Pause)

May the almighty and merciful God, by whose grace you have placed your faith in the First Coming of His Only Begotten Son and yearn for his coming again, sanctify you by the radiance of Christ's Advent and enrich you with his blessing.
All — Amen.

P — As you run the race of this present life, may he make you firm in faith, joyful in hope, and active in charity.
All — Amen.

P — So that, rejoicing now with devotion at the Redeemer's coming in the flesh, you may be endowed with the rich reward of eternal life when he comes again in majesty.
All — Amen.

P — And may the blessing of almighty God, the Father, and the Son, (†) and the Holy Spirit, come down on you and remain with you for ever.
All — Amen.

Dismissal

P — Go in peace.
All — Thanks be to God.