

## Homily for 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent

A grade school class was putting on a Christmas pageant about the story of Mary and Joseph coming to the inn. There was one little boy who wanted very much to be Joseph. But when the parts were handed out, he didn't get it. Instead he was given the role of the Innkeeper. And he was very upset about this.

Through all the rehearsals the little boy kept plotting what he might do to get more attention. Finally the night of the performance arrived. Mary and Joseph came walking across the stage. They knocked on the door of the Inn. The innkeeper opened the door and asked them gruffly what they wanted.

Joseph answered: "We'd like to have a room for the night." Suddenly the innkeeper threw the door open wide and said, "Great. Come on in and I'll give you the best room in the house."

For a few seconds poor little Joseph didn't know what to do. But thinking quickly, Joseph looked past the innkeeper, first to the right and then to the left and said: "No wife of mine is going to stay in a dump like this. Come on, Mary, let's go to the barn."

Christmas, through the eyes of children, is always an exciting event. They bring light-heartedness as in the story of the Christmas

pageant. They also bring tenderness as in the story of a child who Christmas shops for some pajamas for his mother. When asked what size she was, he responds by saying “she is perfect.”

But seeing Christmas only through the eyes of a child can be a trap. Christmas is hardly child’s play. Christmas is God getting very serious with us. So serious that God becomes one of us. Christmas is God inviting us to share the dream, the vision, of a world where peace and forgiveness, justice and tenderness finally find a home.

The key to preparing to celebrate this dream is to learn from Joseph and Mary what it means to trust in God. These two young people who hadn’t the faintest idea of what the future would be like did have something very important. They had faith. Faith would ask them to let go of their own dreams. Faith would lead them through a life of uncertainty and insecurity. Faith would ask a great deal of them. Faith made them instruments of God becoming one of us and one with us.

On this last Sunday of Advent, when Christmas is only days away, the Church reminds us of the great woman of faith whose child is called “God with us.” On this last Sunday of Advent we must learn to follow Joseph and put fears aside so that our hearts might be open to the One who comes not only on Christmas Day but also on every day of our lives.