



**ADVENT REFLECTIONS FOR 2019**  
**Week Four**



## **THIS RESOURCE**

As we come to the end of our season of Advent for 2019, we are mindful of how short it has been but there remains time for us to contemplate the great mystery of this season. As Pope Francis reminds us, Advent is a time to be 'mindful and pray'.

To help us with our spiritual preparation this Advent, we offer four personal reflections – one for each week of Advent - on the important themes of this beautiful season. Each reflection is easy to use in groups OR personally. Each reflection gives us the opportunity to pray, to ponder and to listen to our speakers reflect on our understanding of the season. Some questions help us to go deeper, personally or as a group. We suggest taking one a week, but if you have a parish retreat day these could provide the materials you might want to use for your time together.

We are grateful to Gavin D'Costa, Laura Stotesbury, Fr. Tom Dubois and Sarah Richards for their reflective contributions which will help us to engage more fully with Advent and its rich themes.

## **ADVENT REFLECTION TIME**

### **THE HIDDEN LIFE OF ST JOSEPH**

#### **Prayer for Advent**

This Advent is our preparation  
and in our waiting,  
may we sense your continued work in our lives  
and in the world around us.  
For from ages past,  
no ear has heard,  
no mind has perceived,  
no eye has seen  
any God besides you,  
who works for those who wait for him.  
We anticipate your unfolding work  
and we praise you.

#### **WE LISTEN TO THE WORD OF GOD FROM MATTHEW**

This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit. Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law, and yet did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.

But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."

All this took place to fulfil what the Lord had said through the prophet: “The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel” (which means “God with us”).

When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. But he did not consummate their marriage until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.



### **From a homily by Pope Francis on St. Joseph**

In his homily reported by Vatican News, the Pope meditated on the figure of St. Joseph, presented in the Scriptures as “a righteous man, an observant of the law, a worker, humble, lover of Mary...God reveals to him his mission, Joseph embraces his role and accompanies the growth of the Son of God “in silence, without judging, without speaking, without repeating”.

Saint Joseph helped Jesus to grow, to grow. He sought thus a place for his son to be born; he took care of him; he helped him

grow up; he taught him his charge: so many things ... In silence. He never saw his son as a property: he let him grow in silence. He lets him grow: that would be the word that would help us a lot, we who by nature always want to put our noses everywhere, especially in the lives of others. And why is he doing this? Why the other ...? And we start to behave ... And he lets him grow. He protects. He helps but in silence. ”

St Joseph is “the man of dreams...The dream is a privileged place to seek the truth because there we do not defend ourselves against the truth ... And God also speaks in dreams. Not always, because usually, it’s our unconscious, but God often chooses to speak in dreams ... it shows in the Bible, does not it? Through dreams.

Joseph was the man the man of dreams, but he was not a dreamer, eh? He was not a fancier. A dreamer is something else: he who believes ... come, he is in the clouds, he does not have eyes on earth ... Joseph had his feet on the ground. But he was open.

Do not lose the ability to dream, because to dream is to open the doors in the future. It’s to be fruitful in the future. ”

## **Reflection Sarah Richards**

This will need to be downloaded from [Cliftondiocese.com](http://Cliftondiocese.com)  
Listen to Sarah’s reflection now.





## Questions for Conversation

*What struck you most about Sarah's reflection?*

*Have you ever considered the life of St. Joseph? What have you heard from Sarah's which has changed your thinking about him?*

*What do you think about dreams? Do you think God speaks to us through dreams?*

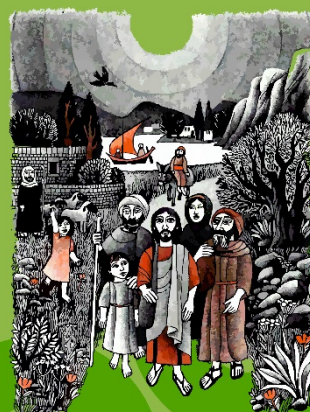
*What aspects of Reni's painting strike you?*

*What choices is God offering you at this stage in your life?*

**Following your conversation** re-read the Scripture passage again. You may like to finish your time of reflection with a time of silence prayer or intercession after which you might pray the **Hail Mary or the Angelus**

## Final Prayer

God of power and mercy,  
open our hearts in welcome.  
Remove the things that hinder us from receiving Christ  
so that we may share his wisdom  
and become one with him  
when he comes in glory,  
for he lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, for ever and ever. Amen.



WHERE TWO OR  
THREE MEET IN MY  
NAME I AM THERE  
AMONG THEM

MATTHEW 18:20

A FUTURE  
FULL OF HOPE  
CLIFTON DIOCESE

communion