

Mosaic Teaching Guide

For Personal Reflection or Face to Face Discussions

Fourth Sunday of Advent 2010

Isaiah 7.10-16

Again the Lord spoke to Ahaz, saying, Ask a sign of the Lord your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven. But Ahaz said, I will not ask, and I will not put the Lord to the test. Then Isaiah said: "Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals, that you weary my God also? Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel. He shall eat curds and honey by the time he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. For before the child knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land before whose two kings you are in dread will be deserted.

Matthew 1.18-25

Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. But just when he had resolved to do 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 as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: "Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel," which means, "God is with us." When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife, but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus.

Questions for Everyone: How well do you wait? On a scale of 1-10, 1 being "I would always open my Christmas presents early if given opportunity" to 10 being "I am willing to wait patiently to open presents," where are you on this waiting scale? Are you finished with your Christmas shopping?

Introduction: The Christmas Story . . . Finally!

"Waiting can be so hard when you're 12! It can be hard when your 45 as well."
What is so hard about waiting? Do you think our culture promotes impatience?

“The season of Advent is all about waiting. Christians are people who wait. Instant gratification is not the way of the Kingdom of God. Learning how to wait well is an important Christian discipline.” Have you ever thought about waiting in terms of a spiritual discipline? When made to wait, how do you generally respond?

The Genesis of Jesus

“Matthew links the lineage of Jesus with history and the birth of Jesus with creation. . . . He explains how it is that Jesus is both the Son of David and the Son of God.” Why is this important for Matthew? Why does it matter that Jesus is the “Son of David?” Why the emphasis on genealogy?

“It’s really hard to be a faithful Christian if you aren’t willing to submit to a time line other than your own.” How do you respond to this comment?

“Waiting patiently in expectation is the foundation of the spiritual life.” (Simone Weil). If this is true, how is your foundation?

“Faith is a way of seeing God in the ordinary and unexpected coincidences of life.” When is the last time you were able to name God’s presence in an ordinary or unexpected coincidence?

Isaiah’s Child

“Prior to the Christmas story no one expected a virgin birth in connection with the Messiah. . . . God is with us in this child in way that no one could have imagined. . . . God is with us, which means, God is not done with us.” Consider the good news that God is not done with you. If you were to believe this, how might this change you?

The God Who Waits

“So when we consider how difficult it can be for us to wait, it might be good for us to contemplate the astounding patience of a God who waits for people to believe. . . . It’s Advent and God is waiting for you.” Is there an area of your life that you know God is waiting for you to act? What will you do about this?