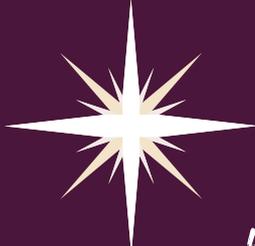
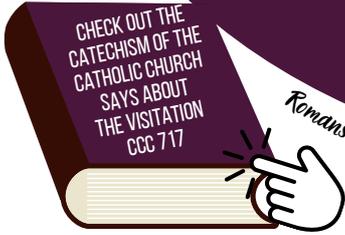




MATTHEW 1: 18-24



Joseph wasn't given certainty. He was given a promise.



Are you certain?

Romans 12:12 "Let your hope keep you joyful, be patient in your troubles, and pray at all times."

WHAT ARE YOUR FAVOURITE CHRISTMAS SONGS? DO YOU HAVE A FAVOURITE RELIGIOUS CAROL? WHICH CAROL SUMS UP THE MEANING OF CHRISTMAS FOR YOU?



DO YOU HAVE A FAVOURITE CHRISTMAS MEMORY?

WATCH THIS VIDEO FROM FR MIKE SCHMITZ, "HAVING JOY IN UNCERTAINTY" (ASCENSION PRESENTS) AND REFLECT ON THE QUESTIONS THAT FOLLOW



- According to Fr Mike, what is the only thing that is certain for us?

- Why does he suggest we find comfort in past Christmas memories?

- What can we let our lack of certainty about the future steal?

- Christmas is a Season of Joy in the midst of uncertainty.

PUT YOURSELF IN JOSEPH'S SANDALS...



How would you have felt before and after hearing the Angel's message?



ARE THE "JOYFUL MYSTERIES" REALLY JOYFUL???



- At the Annunciation, immediately after Mary said yes, what did the Angel do?

- What kind of things could the Angel have told Mary to take away some of her uncertainty? (List 2 things Fr Mike mentions)

- "All is calm, all is bright...." Was it really? What kind of uncertainty did Mary and Joseph face in Bethlehem?



- In the 4th mystery, the Presentation in the temple, where was the uncertainty?



WE CAN LOOK BACK AT THESE STORIES 2000 YEARS ON, KNOWING HOW THINGS WORKED OUT, BUT THEY WERE LIVING THROUGH THEM.

ARE YOU CERTAIN?

MATTHEW 1: 18-24

Even in the darkest times, when we are at our weakest, or suffering the most, when it seems there is no way out, God is _____.



WE CAN CELEBRATE A "MERRY" CHRISTMAS, NOT BECAUSE OF CERTAINTY, BUT BECAUSE WE'VE BEEN GIVEN A SAVIOUR, ONE WHO ENTERS INTO UNCERTAINTY AND HIS PRESENCE IS TRANSFORMING. HE BRINGS JOY TO THE WORLD!

Now Read Matthew 1: 18-24



Ever had plans that were so carefully thought out, so well prepared that you were sure you were in control and everything would work out the way you intended? Life doesn't always work that way does it! Just ask St Joseph! He was betrothed to the beautiful, pure, good and holy virgin Mary. They were ready to start their life together. Then he found out she was expecting a child, and it wasn't his. Can you imagine the confusion, the pain and the whirlwind of emotions he must have felt? Yet Joseph was a good man, a godly man. God honoured his faithfulness and revealed to him in a dream that Mary's child was no ordinary child, but Emmanuel, God with us. She had conceived through the power of the Holy Spirit. I'm sure he still didn't understand fully what all that meant, who could? Joseph trusted God however, and he acted. We see this time and again with Joseph in the Gospel. He prays, he listens, he hears and he obeys. What a role model for all of us, especially when we're confused, or feel overwhelmed. Can you imagine what it was like knowing you were chosen to care for the Son of God, and God's mother? Talk about pressure!! Joseph listened and took the next good step, that's all he was asked to do. Trust and act, and leave the rest to God. Let that be our motto in this final week of Advent!

MISSION!

GOD IS DOING WONDERFUL THINGS IN YOUR LIFE - BUT SOMETIMES WE ARE TOO BUSY OR TOO CAUGHT UP WITH FUTURE WORRIES TO REALISE WHAT HE IS CURRENTLY DOING, OR HAS DONE IN THE PAST. MAKE A LIST OF THE BLESSINGS IN YOUR LIFE, THINGS OR PEOPLE YOU ARE TRULY GRATEFUL FOR. THINK BACK ON SITUATIONS YOU WERE WORRIED ABOUT THAT HAVE SINCE RESOLVED AND HAVE MAYBE EVEN WORKED OUT BETTER THAN YOU HAD INITIALLY HOPED. ADOPT AN ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE THIS WEEK, ESPECIALLY FOR THE GIFT OF OUR SAVIOUR AT CHRISTMAS TIME!



PRAYER TIME!



Choose one of the Joyful Mysteries, and reflect on what is happening in that scene. Ask St Joseph to show you how to trust in God's promises like he did. Then pray a decade of the rosary: One Our Father, Ten Hail Mary's and a Glory Be. You can use this [Ascend YM rosary resource](#) to help you if you need it!



CREATE A PLAYLIST TO LISTEN TO AS YOU REFLECT ON TRUSTING IN GOD



- [Your Promises - Elevation Worship](#)
- [I am a Carpenter - Cher & Gene Klosner](#)
- [Greater Things - Mack Brock](#)
- [Whom shall I fear? \(Chris Tomlin\)](#)
- [Light of the World - Lauren Daigle](#)
- [Even the Winter - Audrey Assad](#)
- [When I think upon Christmas - Hillsong](#)
- [Hallelujah, Light has Come - BarlowGirl](#)

Click the links for the YouTube videos to listen to some suggestions!



6:04 MINS



God's Ways are not our ways
(Fr Mike Schmitz)



Joseph's Lullaby

