

Learning trust from St. Joseph

Prepare: Read

Romans 4:13, 16-18, 22

Matthew 1:16, 18-21, 24

and Luke 2:41-51

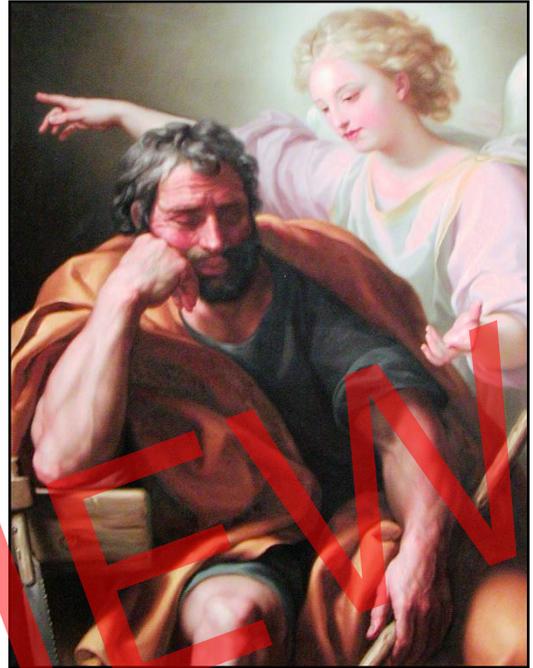
Both of these Gospel readings show us Joseph growing in his ability to trust God. How difficult it must have been to believe Mary's story! So, since he didn't trust her version of the story about her pregnancy, God sent him an angel in a dream.

Now Joseph had to trust that his dream was not a product of his own imagination. Wouldn't it have been more convincing if the angel had appeared to him in person, the way Mary was visited by an angel?

And yet, something about the dream triggered Joseph's faith. He believed what he heard in his sleep. I suspect, though, that a new doubt flooded him as soon as he believed the message of the dream. He might have wondered: "Who am I to raise the Messiah! I can't do this! I'm not worthy of this responsibility and I will make mistakes!"

Maybe the questions lingered only a second, or maybe he had to get down on his knees and meditate to feel God's assurance. Either way, he chose to trust God, which gave him the freedom to feel assured that God would help him take care of Mary and the child.

Ever wonder whether God is inspiring you or if it's just your imagination? All too often it turns out to be only our imagination, so how do we know when to trust that inner voice and when to disregard it? If it's from God, it will meet the following guidelines: (1) It is loving; it cooperates with and enhances loving relationships with God and with others. (2) Nothing about it contradicts anything in scripture and in Church teachings.



Plus, we can ask God to protect us from making blunders, trusting him to re-direct us if, while desiring to do his will, we misread the clues.

Years later, when Jesus was twelve years old, Joseph's trust was again stretched. He lost the child for *three days!* He had to choose repeatedly, moment by moment, to trust God no matter how long the boy was missing. You and I have to trust God the same way. We can either look at the evidence that says how bad things are — and live in worry — or we can look at God and remember that he cares with infinite love and is worthy of our trust.

In Romans 4:13-22, we're reminded that Abraham "hoped against hope", which is the meaning of trust. In each problem you face today — especially the long-standing ones — stop and think about the choice you have: You can worry and be afraid or you can trust God. Ask St. Joseph to help you!