

“Joseph, to whom she was engaged, was a righteous man and did not want to disgrace her publicly, so he decided to break the engagement quietly. As he considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream. “Joseph, son of David,” the angel said, “do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife. For the child within her was conceived by the Holy Spirit. And she will have a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” Matthew 1:19-21 NLT

## lectio // Matthew 1:18-25

Mathew tells us that Joseph had a HUGE problem to deal with! Joseph was engaged to Mary, but not yet married and she was a virgin, yet became PREGNANT through the power of the Holy Spirit. This is a big deal even today. We pretend it's so common that it's not an issue anymore, but we all know that's not true - it's still BIG news. Joseph was a good guy and wanted to do the right thing, the “wise” thing so he made two decisions: One, he wouldn't disgrace her PUBLICLY. Why would anyone choose to disgrace someone at all, let alone publicly? Because it was their strange way of “proving” themselves innocent. So, right away Joe's future and entire family reputation is at risk, because he decided not to defend himself. Two, he would “quietly” divorce her. Engagement then is not quite like today. Engagement then was as binding as marriage - it was a family/community contract. Even having finances, property or valuable items exchanged. So Joe, backing out of the deal would immediately destroy all relationships with Mary's family and all those financial, contractual agreements would have to be undone. There were no “divorce” lawyers back then (unless the priests played that role). HOWEVER, as he “considered” this, an angel visits him in a dream. The angel explains what happened and how he should make his final decision. Notice that the angel (and by proxy, God) did not force Joseph to marry her. You could say, “well, God knew that Joe would go along with it because He's omniscient.” Yes, but Joseph didn't know that! The dream convinced Joseph and the rest is history. Have you had God reveal something in a dream or even a vision (an awake moment where you literally/physically see something or your mind is kind of carried off to somewhere else)? It is extraordinary that God still uses dreams and visions today.

## oratio

Dad,

I really appreciate knowing that the people in the Bible were real and struggled with huge, very big issues.

Many times I have felt like I was the only one to ever experience that kind of pressure to make a decision or face an enormously overwhelming set of circumstances. And, it is even better when I realize your grace is there when I need to hear from you - whether it's “fear not” or “it's going to be okay.”

## contemplatio

rest in the presence of God, allowing the words revealed to take root