



## Wednesday Prayer

### 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent – Show Us a Sign

**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.”**

**Matthew 1:18-21**

The Scripture for this week finds God’s people looking for signs from him. The carpenter, Joseph, is wrestling with a very thorny problem. His fiancé Mary has just informed him that she is pregnant with a Child conceived by the Holy Spirit. He knows Mary to be a steadfast follower of all Jewish law and customs. But her story seems preposterous. He decides he will send Mary and the Baby she carries away, divorce her quietly so as not to ruin either of their lives. But wait! An angel comes to Joseph as he is sleeping. The angel is saying, *Take her as your wife. Her Child truly is the Messiah who will save his people from their sins.* So, with this sign from God, Joseph can move ahead with his plans to take Mary as his wife.

In Isaiah 7:10-16, a faithless ruler named Ahaz refuses to ask God for a sign, to “put God to the test.” Like Satan quoting Scripture to Jesus in the wilderness: neither Satan nor Ahaz really believes God will send a sign to him. But Isaiah tells him of the coming Messiah, an undeniable sign from the God of the Israelites. The message from Psalm 80 reveals: *Show us, God, that you care by restoring, saving, shining on us.* It is no accident that these three passages are read on the fourth Sunday of Advent, as we eagerly anticipate “the rest of the story,” that Jesus Christ is born to save us from our sins and give all who believe eternal life.

But how does this Scripture relate to our responsibilities with Cherish All Children? Few people today have not heard about children being trafficked for sex all over the world. The news media pumps out stories daily about the egregious behavior of those who seek out and harm children, whether through online sextortion or in person traffickers. When should we act? The answer is *now*. We don’t need to wait for further signs. There can be no waiting as we step forward to protect children’s God-given identity, dignity, self-worth, and value as a child of God.

**Awaken your might, O Lord! Restore us, make your face shine upon us and renew our work together in cherishing all your children. Amen.**

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