

REFLECTIONS

December 18, 2005

**...he did what the angel of the Lord
commanded him...**

Matthew 1:24

When It Makes No Sense

Part three in the series *Preparing for Christmas*

Nativity scenes are abundant around our house. Some of them stay up all year. But there are some special ones that adorn special places in our home only at Christmas time. This year as I set the figures in place, I was especially struck by looking at Joseph.

Here is a man looking affectionately at his newborn son as any proud father would. Yet it is a baby not his own. He looks at the child with reverence as if he knows how extraordinary this child is. In fact he *does* know the whole astonishing story. His bride had a child by the Holy Spirit and he has been asked to serve as its earthly father.

I can't help but find Joseph to be one of the most remarkable men in the Bible. I rank his faith and obedience up there with Noah and Abraham. God asked Joseph to stand by his bride to be, to love, honor, and cherish her; and he did even when it made no sense to do so. Just like it was for Mary, it was a long nine months for him too. The girl he loved left home for six months and he was alone to prepare the home they would live in. When she returned, he must have had to answer some difficult questions. Then he was required to make a journey of some 60 rugged miles from Nazareth to Bethlehem,.

I suppose that he could have left Mary behind, but he didn't want to be without her nor did he want to leave her on her own at such a time. It must have been twice as hard. He could have made better time without her. But his life was more than himself. She was a part of his life too—and so was the Child. His role was to be there for his bride, to stand by her, to attend to her every need, and to protect her from both danger and disgrace. And he was there to love and serve the Christ Child.

Joseph had a very special role in preparing for Christmas. He was the consummate husband who became a model father. But most of all, he had faith in God and was obedient to Him even when it made no sense to do so.

This season, we have a very special role too. While each of us has a slightly different one, all of us are called to love and serve the Christ Child. And we are called to have faith in God and to be obedient to Him even when it makes no sense to do so.

May we do as well as Joseph did.

"You are the light of the world,"

Richard +