

'THE COURAGE TO FOLLOW WHEREVER THE HOLY SPIRIT LEADS'
4th SUNDAY OF ADVENT 2019

WE APPROACH CHRISTMAS

As we approach Christmas this year,
we hear in today's Gospel that *'God-is-with-us'*.

We wonder at the **courage of both Mary and Joseph in receiving Jesus lovingly.**

- Their courage to listen to God's will,
despite whatever gossip, remarks and frowns might be around the town.
- Their courage to follow God's call.
- Their courage to be just and "righteous".
- Their courage to follow wherever the Holy Spirit leads.

We are called in Jesus to work together in justice
for the human family and for the earth, our common home.

ENVIRONMENT

In 1971, **Pope Paul V1** in his apostolic letter *'Octogesima Adveniens'*, said that
*'another transformation is making itself felt,
one which is the dramatic and unexpected consequence of human activity...
we are 'suddenly becoming aware that by an ill-considered exploitation of nature'
we risk 'destroying it and becoming'
in our turn 'the victim of this degradation...'
thus creating an environment for tomorrow which may well be intolerable.
This is a wide-ranging social problem which concerns the entire human family.'*

Like Mary and Joseph, we are called to have courage
and follow wherever the Holy Spirit leads us
in our caring for creation and in caring for the human family.

CALL TO ACTION

Concerning social justice issues, we are called to accept responsibility.

Pope Paul V1 put it this way:

*"It is to all Christians that we address a fresh and insistent call to action....
Let each one examine himself, to see what he has done up to now,
and what he ought to do.
It is not enough to recall principles, state intentions,
point to crying injustice and utter prophetic denunciations;
these words will lack real weight
unless they are accompanied for each individual
by a livelier awareness of personal responsibility
and by effective action.
It is too easy to throw back on others responsibility for injustice,
if at the same time one does not realize
how each one shares in it personally,
and how personal conversion is needed first.
This basic humility will rid action of all inflexibility and sectarianism,*

*it will also avoid discouragement
in the face of a task which seems limitless in size.
The Christian's hope comes primarily from the fact that he knows
that the Lord is working with us in the world,
continuing in his Body which is the Church –
and, through the Church, in the whole of mankind –
the Redemption which was accomplished on the Cross
and which burst forth in victory on the morning of the Resurrection
This hope springs also from the fact that the Christian knows
that other men are at work,
to undertake actions of justice and peace working for the same ends.
For beneath an outward appearance of indifference,
in the heart of every man there is a will to live in brotherhood
and a thirst for justice and peace, which is to be expanded.'*

May we accept this invitation and make a difference this Christmas
through the love of God for us and for creation.

Let us pray.

Fr Gerry

[Readings: <https://universalis.com/1000/mass.htm>]

Other references: Pope Paul VI's Apostolic Letter [Octogesima Adveniens](#) on the 80th anniversary of
the Pope Leo XIII's Encyclical [Rerum Novarum](#)

