

## REFLECTION

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*"Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid..." Matthew 1:18-24*

**I**n today's Gospel reading, an angel of the Lord speaks to Joseph in a dream, encouraging him to accept the gift of baby Jesus into his family and to "not be afraid." We can only imagine how scared Mary and Joseph, asked to raise the Son of God, must have felt during this time of uncertainty and change. Despite this fear, Joseph follows God's call and takes Mary into his home, choosing to accept the Gift that God has placed before him.

Like Joseph, I feel that my own fear often prevents me from serving and receiving God in the way that He desires. My fear of change, fear of making a mistake, fear of disappointing others, and fear of the unknown can be so overwhelming sometimes that I forget to listen to God speaking to me, asking me to embrace his gifts and to love and serve without fear or hesitation. While only Mary and Joseph were called to raise baby Jesus, God invites each one of us to serve him according to our own talents and circumstances and to accept the gifts that He puts in our lives. Today's Gospel reading encourages us to act like Joseph, transcending fear in order to serve the Lord as He asks us to.

## PRAYER

*Lord, help me to let go of fear and to embrace your Gift fully. Let me be of service to You and to carry out your will. Help me to follow You every day without hesitation. Amen.*

## SERVICE SUGGESTION

This week, I invite you to take time to reflect on what fears you have that prevent you from completely accepting the Lord's gifts. How do these fears limit your ability to love others and yourself unconditionally? Challenge yourself to overcome these fears and to freely and fully respond to God's call to service.

## Focus: SPIRITUALITY

While it may be difficult, it is essential to embrace uncertainty, discomfort, and fear and to trust in God's will. As an introvert-at-heart working with approximately four hundred high school students, my work often challenges me to be more loud, assertive, and outgoing than I would typically be comfortable with. While this was challenging and uncomfortable at first, I've grown so much from this experience.

Service is not always easy, but I think that if we are following God's genuine call to serve, service is always rewarding. The students and staff at Don Bosco Cristo Rey High have shown me compassion, joy, love, authenticity and vulnerability in a way that reflects God. Despite the initial discomfort we might feel in serving others, it is important to keep in mind the words of today's Gospel, "God is with us." We can grow spiritually by overcoming fear and discomfort in order to follow God's call to serve.

