

**THE QUESTION OF THE WEEK**

“The angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said:  
‘Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary your betrothed into your home.  
For it is through the Holy Spirit that this child has been conceived in her.’”  
Matthew 1: 21

Since Christmas two years ago when I received a FitBit watch, I have become aware of various dimensions of my life and physiology that I was unaware of for many years even though these things were going on inside of me. For example. Each morning I sync my FitBit and in the process I receive a report on how I slept during the night. I am informed about the oxygen level in my blood throughout my hours of sleep and if the level was in the appropriate range for good sleep. I am also informed about the amount of deep sleep I received or light sleep, or REM sleep or wakefulness.

For a long time I have associated REM sleep with sleep in which I dream. That is most often the case but not exclusively. The trouble is that I so rarely remember my dreams even when I have REM sleep that lasts 90 or 100 minutes. It is not that I do not dream. I do not remember them. I have friends and family members who tell me that they dream every night and they often remember their dreams, even multiple dreams. Sometimes the dreams are vivid to the point of being rather strange or wild. But I am told that most people do dream and there is a level of incorporating life's experiences that goes on in our dreams.

In today's gospel, Joseph has a dream and in that dream he receives a message from the Lord. He was going to put aside Mary his betrothed because she is with child. Not his. We do not know if he does not believe her or rather he so believes her and that God has overshadowed her that he is frightened and needs to back away from the relationship. But the word of God comes to him. “Do not be afraid Joseph.” In the morning, he has to decide. Was the dream real? From God? To be accepted and honored, or not? We know how he decided, and we know the rest of the story. How about your own dreams? Can you ask the Lord the same questions that Joseph asked that morning? Was the dream real? From God? To be accepted and honored, or not? Have you realized you can do this? Should do this? The question of the week.