

Christmas 2018  
St. William Champion  
Isaiah 9.1-6///Titus 2.11-14///Luke 2.1-14  
Midnight Mass Readings at all Masses

→it is interesting to note that throughout the New Testament all of the Christmas stories take place at night

→Matt. speaks of the Magi, who followed the star across the night sky

→Luke reports that Jesus was born in a stable...because the inn at Bethlehem was already filled for the night

→Luke also speaks of shepherds, keeping night watch over their flock

--and so, it seems evident that Jesus was born sometime in the night hours

---even many of our Christmas hymns speak of a night birth...with perhaps the most popular being "Silent night" and "O Holy Night"

→likewise in the other gospel passage that could have been chosen for today....we hear John writing to us: "the light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it

→yet in recent weeks our world has seen a number of events that has made many of us wonder about the real meaning of Christmas....

→events that have affected us all and changed our perspective on life these days...

→it is an incredible image....that that tiny light shining first in Bethlehem still shines bright in our hearts some 2000 years later in spite of so many attempts to extinguish it

→Herod tried to extinguish the light with his slaughter of the innocents, but failed...

→religious and political leaders tried at Calvary but on the third day the light broke into flame again...

→and many others have tried over the centuries and through the years but **always** the light has gone right on shining.

---the darkness has never been able to put it out...and even today...there remain many attempts to put the light out...but it continues to burn brightly in our world, in our homes and in our lives....

and that, is what the feast of Christmas celebrates...the shining of **the light** in our world, in our communities, in our families and in our world.

PAUSE

→a while back, there was a television commercial that featured a father tucking his young son into bed

→the little boy asks his father, "did you look in the closet?"

the father opens the door and says..."no monsters in there."

---the boy then asks..."did you look under the bed"

the father bends down and says..."no monsters under there

---the boy then asks..."did you look outside"

the father goes to the window and says..."no monsters out there either."

now thinking that the boy is finally content...the father gets ready to turn off the light.. and the little boy chimes in...and says..."Dad, can you leave the light on anyway?" PAUSE

→the season of Advent that we just finished focused on our hearts being full of hope and joy and it is the light of hope...the light joy...that Christ brings to our world and to all of us this night [day]....

PAUSE

→Christmas is....God looking from heaven upon the human race, staggering around frightening and confused...wanting to help...and love and care for us....

→it's about God becoming one of us...and giving to us the power to do for each other what God has done for us....

PAUSE

→I am reminded of this great gift...each year as I watch "A Charlie Brown Christmas"

→my favorite part is when Linus reminds Charlie Brown and all of us of the true meaning of Christmas

→Charlie Brown, like most of us is overwhelmed with the trappings of what Christmas appears to be.....

→he yells. "isn't there anyone who knows what Christmas is all about?"

→and Linus calmly says, "sure Charlie Brown, I can tell you what Christmas is all about."

→then Linus stands onstage clinging to his blanket and quotes from St. Luke

"and there were in the country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night...and lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them and the glory of the Lord shined all around them"

PAUSE

→when you think about it....Christmas **IS** God turning on the light for the world and for you and me

---and no one or nothing can ever put that light out...

---no matter how much our sinfulness and our selfishness contributes to the darkness of  
life

---no matter how dark our world may become.....

→the brightness of our Savior, born in the midst of darkness....will always be there

→like that little boy in bed afraid of monsters or Linus...who explains to Charlie Brown  
the meaning of Christmas

...Christmas is the light for our world!

---and today it shines brightly once again

→may it continue to shine in our hearts and lives, not only today but in the days and months  
to come

because tonight [today] are hearts are truly filled with hope and joy.