

Christmas 2020  
St. William Champion  
Isaiah 9.1-6//Titus 2.11-14//Luke 2.1-14  
Midnight Mass Readings at all Masses

→each year it is very easy to get wrapped up in all the trappings of Christmas...the lights and trees...the food and presents....the gatherings and good times...and through it all there is always a constant reminder to us to keep Christmas simple...a simple birth...a simple truth...

→that God's love for us is the true gift of this season...

→and this year... we have to unfortunately add...keep it small and keep it safe.

→we know that God's love...his gift to us...is manifested each week as we gather to celebrate the Eucharist...by eating and dining with the Lord...and one another

→and we usually think of this theme more around Easter time when we celebrate the Mass of the Last Supper right before Easter...however in tonight's reading Luke reminds us that FROM Christ's beginning he was about eating and dining and feeding us...

→so what is the main symbol of Christmas that shows us the Christ came to feed us from his birth?...that answer is...the manger...

→at its root...the word "manger" comes from an old French word meaning "to chew"...that's what we do with food isn't it...we chew it...we manger it! [if you will]

→the Italians have the word "mange" [mang-a]...mange..mange...eat something you look so skinny...is what we are often told...

→[and] so on this special [day] night...we celebrate that Jesus comes to feed and nourish us so that we can feed one another...

→and this happens....not at home of Mary and Joseph...but rather in a barn...among hard-working people...shepherds....a working class of people considered to be unclean because of their occupation....along with their animals...to show us that God's love is always stretching beyond our lives and world.

→a manger isn't much when you think about it...it was a sort of container for the hay that the animals ate...not like a crib, or a bed, or anything like that....and as much as we remember the manger...we also remember why Jesus was born there....

→we remember that when Mary and Joseph got to the inn...they were told there was no room for them...

→and I've often wondered if that in fact was really the case....

→have you ever thought that maybe **there was** room for them at the inn....and that maybe the innkeeper saw this unmarried pregnant couple and decided that he didn't want to rent a room to them?

--or maybe...if there weren't any rooms at this particular inn...there might have been other places available for them to stay that night....

→or that Jesus being born in a manger was simply meant to be....

→I find this significant because...no matter what the place...no matter what condition and no matter what circumstances we face this Christmas...Christ continues to break into our lives to feed us and to be with us...to encourage us and help us remain strong.

PAUSE

→the setting of Christ's birth reminds us that we will always be nursed and taken care of by God no matter where we are and what we face.

→and our gathering this Christmas is about what God did long ago...and more importantly....about what God is still doing...for us....today

→and it is also about what you and I are expected to do next as well

→today God comes to us with the assurance that he will always be with us...no matter how difficult any situation might be that we face.....

→the story we tell once again today...teaches us more than about an event that happened long ago...it teaches, encourages and inspires us to open ourselves up to what God is trying to do in us and in our world

→tonight [today] is our way of telling God that there is still room for him in our lives, our world...and in our hearts.

→...and that is what we celebrate this Christmas

→no doubt the past few months have been tough...it certainly hasn't been what we expected...or what we wanted

→unfortunately we continue to deal with the uncertainty of the virus...some are consumed by fear...others are ill...some afraid...and all of us concerned...but there is hope ahead

→our God has come to us...and bright light is shining forth...

.....→Christmas is...God looking from the heavens upon the human race...staggering around...frightened and confused...wanting to help and care for us

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

→so from a manger to manga...manga...

→we need to keep feeding each other as Christ feeds us...

and tonight [today] is the night [day] in which....after missing, adjusting and adapting so much of life over the past months....we are being asked once again...if there a place for God to be with us....so that we might open our doors, our hearts, and our lives to his presence

...and allow him to dwell in us

...to stay with us...

and become a part of who we are.....