

Christmas 2021
St. William Champion
Isaiah 9.1-6//Titus 2.11-14//Luke 2.1-14
Midnight Mass Readings at all Masses

→an elderly man in Oklahoma called his son in New York and said ... “I hate to ruin your day but I have to tell you that your mother and I are getting a divorce after 45 years of marriage”

→the surprised son replies... “what are you talking about.”... and the Father says... “we can’t stand the sight of each other any longer... so call your sister and tell her the news....

→so frantically, the son calls his sister and explodes on the phone...to which she replies. “like heck they’re getting divorced...I’ll take care of this.”

→so she calls her father immediately and screams at him ... “you are not getting divorced...don’t do a single thing until I get there...I am calling my brother back and **we will** both be there tomorrow...until then **do not** (*I repeat*) **do not** do a thing”....she yelled as she hung up the phone...

→to which the old man turned to his wife and said... “ok...its all set...they are both coming for Christmas **and** paying their own air-fare.”

PAUSE

→I have made it no secret that one of my all-time favorite TV shows is the “Big Bang Theory” and in a close second is “Everybody Loves Raymond”thanks to Netflix I get to binge watch episode after episode.

→one of my favorite episodes from “Everybody Loves Raymond” is an episode call the “the Angry Family.”

→it starts with the entire Barone family...Ray, Deborah, Robert, Marie, and Frank sitting in a Kindergarten classroom listening to stories that the children wrote....when it is time for one of Ray’s twin sons to read his story, Jeffrey begins by saying the title of his story is “the Angry Family”....

→and he begins.... “the daddy was mad at the mommy....the mommy was mad at the daddy....the mommy and daddy **were very mad** at the grandpa...and the grandma got mad at everybody....the grown-ups were always very loud that it hurt the kids ears.”

→certainly not the kind of story one would expect to hear....

→the next scene finds the whole family now in front of their pastor...Fr. Hubley, along with the teacher, and school counselor...and Fr. Hubley begins by asking... “where could all this anger be coming from.”

→and that is the question I pose to you tonight [this morning]....because if we translate that story into our time here and now...it might read...

→“the democrats are always mad at the republicans...and the republicans are always mad at the democrats...some are mad at those who do get the vaccine and others are mad at those who don’t....on airplanes people get mad at those who don’t wear a face mask...in schools parents are mad at those who do.

→in our courts everyone gets mad at any decision that is made...and on the roads, in stores, at school, in church....someone always seems to be mad at someone...

→for better or worse...and whether we like it or not...could it be that we have become “the angry family?”

→and tonight [today] as we gather to be with the Lord ...could he be asking us...“where is all this anger coming from?”

→and perhaps more importantly... “what might we do to put a stop to it.”

PAUSE

→it is Christmas 2021...it comes to us in the midst of division, unrest, uncertainty, anxiety and ambiguity...

→yet through it all...we gather to celebrate that Jesus has come to us...to feed, strength and nourish us...

→tonight [today] should be a time of new hope...new joy...and new attitudes

PAUSE

→every Christmas we hear the same story...of how God’s Son came from heaven to a manger...taking on our human nature and living among us...

→of how his coming has changed the world forever...even for those who do not believe in Jesus or cannot accept him or his message...

→they cannot change the fact that our world is different because of tonight [today]

→and through it all...we gather here to celebrate God’s gift to you and me....

→every year we hear the same story...but **perhaps this year** **MIGHT** we hear it differently....

→putting aside our differences... our disagreements....our disparities

→putting aside all **this anger** that seems to have taken hold of our world and us....

PAUSE

→for better or worse we are not the exact same person we were last year at this time...

→we might have experienced the birth of a new child to the family or the loss of a loved one...illness may have touched us, or good fortune may have blessed us.

--we may have grown stronger or weaker...learned more and forgotten some

--we might even have new friends or lost old ones...

--our health may have improved or it may have declined...

Whatever may have happened ...we still gather here to celebrate God's gift to you and me....

→and so...as we give our gifts to one another this Christmas...our world might not be perfect...and we who live in it might be less than perfect as well....but tonight [today] we share **God's gift** with one another...

→and....the gifts we give....are a part of who we are...and who we hope to be...

→we give ourselves...to the goodness of the world....to the life of one another...to the spirit of our dreams.

PAUSE

→this night [day] we celebrate the best in each one of us...this Christmas...like every Christmas we **give** and **get**...the gift of Jesus Christ...coming to be with us...living among us...in the midst of our ordinary, sinful, less than perfect world...

→God's gift... dwelling in our midst....redeeming the broken hearted...and renewing the face of the earth..

→the perfect gift....that comes to us this night [this day] from heaven to a manger...

PAUSE

→the angry family episode of "Everybody Loves Raymond" closes with some simple, yet profound advice from Raymond's pastor Fr. Hubley...that easily applies to all of us here and now...especially during these times....and this Christmas....

→he says to the family with regards to their anger.... "it's not about you...or you...or you....or you...or you....

tonight [today]...it's about this little guy...who in a sweet and simply way...is giving all of us a message...