

Advent Reflection – Tuesday, Dec. 17, 2019

Genesis 49:2, 8-10; Matthew 1:1-17



Today's scripture readings are all about family and lineage. In the Gospel, it seems as if St. Matthew has been bitten by the genealogy bug, as the entire passage looks like an Ancestry.com entry. It traces the lineage from Abraham, through David and Solomon, all the way to St. Joseph. I will admit that, after looking at today's readings, I was at a loss on what to reflect upon. However, after further thought and prayer, it occurred to me how much I relate to Joseph.

Clearly, Joseph comes from a powerful family line, out of the House of David. He seems to be of excellent standing in his community. Yet he was asked by God to set that lineage aside and father a child that was not his by birth. As a foster and adoptive father to one child, and hopefully soon to be an adoptive father to our second foster child, I can attest to how incredibly difficult, yet eternally rewarding Joseph's task was. Yet he had the faith to do it without regard to his own standing in society, or to how difficult it might be.

We think about the holiday season as being such a joyful time. But if you think about the Holy Family, the journey they had to undertake, the obstacles they had to face, joy is probably not the first thing that comes to mind. However, with the birth of that precious gift of God's child, it all became worthwhile.

For many of us, family is one of the most important parts of the Christmas season. However, we need to keep in mind that not everyone has what we do. There are so many out there who are alone, and this season can be especially hard on them. In my experience as a foster parent, I have also learned that, for people (especially children) who have experienced trauma, the Christmas season can be a very difficult time when old wounds are reopened and old traumas are relived.

I bring this up simply so that we remember to count our blessings this year. If you are lucky enough to have a loving family that you enjoy spending time with, say some extra prayers of thanks for that precious gift. Also say some prayers for those who don't have those blessings, or those for whom time with family is not an enjoyable experience. May the light and peace of Christ that comes into our lives at Christmas be a beacon to those who are lost and afraid. And may we give the gift of our love to those who might not otherwise have it.

- Brian Mitchell