

December 25, 2020 | The Nativity of the Lord

[Is 52:7-10](#)

[Ps 98:1, 2-3, 3-4, 5-6](#)

[Heb 1:1-6](#)

[Jn 1:1-18](#)

By Fr. Francis Gargani, C.Ss.R.

Though not a fan of the situation comedy television genre, after some initial misgiving, I have become an enthusiastic fan of *Schitt's Creek* which swept the Emmys. On the surface, it is about a husband and wife and their adult daughter and son who have come upon “hard times,” as it were, “falling” from the lifestyle of the rich and famous. Now living in a 1950’s “left-over” motel in a seemingly God-forsaken town that is the only thing left they own after losing their entire portfolio of video franchises and real estate, including their own mansion and cars, they go into exile. With only the clothes on their back, and yes, a truck-full of luggage with the most incredible clothes you ever have seen, they retreat depressed and defeated to this “hole in the wall.”

Of course, they are totally “out of place,” prancing around the town in clothes that were once one-of-a-kind on Paris fashion runways, and their constant references to keeping company with Arabian princes and the glittering set make them come off as ridiculous and sad cast-a-ways of voracious capitalism. But as the series progresses, and they go from one situation to another, with an incredible cast of town characters that evolve from caricature to beautifully-drawn human beings, they become “incarnate” before our very eyes, and become so much more than harlequin characters washed up on the rocky shores of first-world laissez-faire capitalistic market economy. They take on “flesh and blood,” as they develop relationships both with each other and the at-first easily-dismissed townspeople.

Schitt's Creek is like watching words of kindness, understanding, affirmation, forgiveness, sympathy, and challenge take on flesh. I think it’s a Christmas Story, but not your typical drippy sentimentality Hollywood Christmas story. It’s about people losing themselves to find their more authentic selves. It’s about narcissistic, self-absorbed characters, formerly drowning in materialism and grieving its absence, birthing before our very eyes into their “Christic selves.” Clothes still become the woman/man, but oh, what emerges from the womb of *Schitt's Creek* is altogether something new and wonderful – people coming into their wholeness and integrity because they are, slowly yet surely, from one situation to another, one episode after another, born *from love to love*.

For Christmas is all about God’s ongoing incarnation in *us*! The Johannine Gospel for the Christmas Mass during the day moves our focus from the historical birth of Christ to the radically transforming Mystery of the Logos, the Word of God, becoming flesh, pitching his tent among us, and what that means for us in the here and now. Just as in the Advent Season we cry out “Come, Servant Savior Jesus,” rather than “Come, Baby Jesus,” Christmas is all about crying out for Christ to be born anew in us, the living Church. Each spiral of the liturgical year, therefore, draws us ever more deeply into radical transformation. But not just as individuals, important as that may be,

but as a Church, a People committed to joining John “to testify to the light, the true light, which enlightens everyone. . . !”

Epiphany, the second movement in the one Christmas Symphony, makes clear that we have this festal holiday every year so that, slowly yet surely, from one situation to another, one episode after another, we recognize our, and everyone’s, authentic identity in Christ. More and more, not only are we born to our Christic selves, but more and more, we are renewed in the hope to bring about the world’s Christic transformation. More and more we are plunged into the dream of God anew. Isaiah’s prophetic vision becomes real: “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of those who bring glad tidings, announcing peace, bearing good news, announcing salvation and saying to Zion, ‘Your God is King!’”

More and more both Christmas and Epiphany invites us to give birth to the works of justice and compassion and peace. Isaiah’s dream of the peaceable kin-dom, in which the child can play by the viper’s den and the lion and lamb play together, becomes ours. We spiral ever more deeply into the Christmas/Epiphany Mystery of transfiguration, with each yearly celebration, everyone and everything ever more fully shimmering with divinity, for:

“From his fullness, we have all received, grace in place of grace, because while the law was given through Moses, grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.”

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