

Light

One hallmark of this time of year is the growing darkness. One seems to be not able to avoid it. Every year, it all begins when the leaves start dropping and the trees are stripped bare by the winds and weather of Fall. We then fall back for daylight savings and as a result end up waking up in the dark, sometimes leaving for work in the dark, and then coming home in the dark. This is a dark time of year and we cannot avoid it.

On top of that, obviously, we have had quite a year. 2020 has been overwhelming. It has been a year of increasing anxiety and fear in every sector of life and a year of trauma and suffering all of us have never seen. We have been tired of the news, exhausted of the time we are living, we have been stripped of energy, and like the trees, have been laid bare as plans have been cancelled yet again.

And yet, it is here in this time of growing darkness, that the Light, Jesus Christ, still shines. The gospel of John proclaims on Christmas Day, what we already know inside to be true; ¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being ⁴in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. ⁵**The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.** (John 1:1-5)

Nothing can overcome God's Light. Not this time. Not this virus. Not these divisions. Nothing can overcome God's peace. Nothing can separate us from God's love. No single person, or group, can ever take God's joy from the world. No one, dare I say with hope, is able to ever even avoid, the Light, Jesus Christ. Every single darkness has already been overcome. Every single darkness will be overcome. This is the hope of the world.

With the Light of Christ shining brightly still, even now, which we believe to be given to us in Baptism, we can be strengthened for

such a time as this. Our work in the darkness, is to continue sharing our inner light, hope, peace, joy, and love which can help to make the world a little brighter. All of this we do, because Jesus Christ, the Light of the world, is still shining in the darkness, and the Light will not be snuffed out.

If you look closely at our world, in the midst of darkness, we can still see the Light of Christ shining like stars in a dark winter night. We have seen the stars shining at night in our world as healthcare workers, nurses and doctors, work in an ever anxious, fearful, and exhausted way to help heal the world. We have seen the stars shining in the night as medical research scientists, virologists, and doctors from all over the world use their God-given light to race toward a vaccine at a speed that is unimaginable. We have seen the world come together on this vaccine. We have seen the stars shining in the night as tired and exhausted teachers, find new ways to educate. We have seen the stars shining in the night as our children and grandchildren still make us smile. We have seen the stars shining in the night as parents at their wits end, still manage to find the time, to be present. We have seen this moment in history, and in hope, we will see a way through. If we look closely, we can see rather clearly the stars shining in the darkness when hope, peace, love, and joy are shared amongst us.

As we move through this time of darkness this Advent, may we prepare to see the Light of Christ shining through what we do to help, heal, and restore. May we prepare to see the Light of Christ coming to heal our relationships which have been broken and strained. May we prepare ourselves and embrace even a long dark winter and keep our focus always on Christ's Light shining still in our world and inside of each one of us, which is still leading us to help and serve our neighbors in need making us all radiate from within, of which no darkness can overcome. Amen.

—Pastor Matt