

Jesus: The Light of the World

My brothers and sisters in Christ,

This is the strangest experience of my life as a priest; to celebrate Sunday Mass in an empty church.

Today's readings speak of the **Light of the World**. It may appear strange and even contradictory to speak about light today in the face of the darkness that humanity finds itself in due to the coronavirus. The darkness of fear, of isolation and boredom, of loneliness, of uncertainty, of not being able to go to church in person and participate and receive the Eucharist. Some of you have been laid off from work, some of you have had your hours at work reduced, and you are filled with anxiety about your finances and how to care for your loved ones and pay the bills. Some are devastated because they cannot visit and care for their vulnerable loved ones. Doctors, nurses and caregivers are stretched to their limits as they are on the frontlines caring for patients and combating this pandemic.

In life at its dreariest, ugliest, scariest, messiest; in life at its most terrorizing, hopeless, and painful; Jesus chose to say to us, **"While I am in the world, I am the light of the world."**

The man in the gospel was born blind out of no fault of his own. We can imagine him perceiving the world from his own human reality as a dark and unjust place, filled with hardships, ridicule, hopelessness, and no one to speak for him.

In the face of the difficulties of our time, we are like the man born blind in the gospel, who was hopeless, insecure and living at the mercy of others until he encountered Jesus Christ, the Divine Physician. An encounter that brought light into his life, restored his human dignity and transformed him to the point that he began to see hope again, his faith became stronger, he spoke for himself with courage and became a fearless witness to faith in God. He found what was missing in his life in Jesus Christ.

Where do you find light and hope? As individuals, as a nation and as one human family, we too can find our light and hope in Jesus because when we do, we can live as children of light.

Connect with Jesus through prayer, especially now more than ever. Pray that your faith may not be weakened but may become stronger. Pray for other people as well, especially those on the front lines fighting this pandemic. The power of prayer is never silent.

Connect with Jesus through His Words in the Scriptures. This is a time to look for where your Bible is, dust it off and allow the word of God to nourish you. As you read the Word of God, open your heart and let Jesus speak to you.

Finally, remember that by our Baptism, we share in the life of Christ and thus are the light of Christ in the world. The words of Jesus in the gospel – **While I am in the world, I am the light of the world** – are very much alive today because of our presence in the world. Because of you, Jesus expressed today in our time that he is still in the world, and he is the light of the world. How can we then become that beacon of light, hope, and peace for the world today? We can do so by connecting with other people, especially our seniors and those more vulnerable to this virus. Since we cannot physically connect with others, call someone and check up on them.

Paul, in today's second reading enjoins us to live by saying: "Brothers and sisters: You were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light, for light produces every kind of goodness and righteousness and truth."

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Please stay home and stay well, and don't hesitate to reach out to me or to others during this difficult time.

In Christ,

Father Anthony Ahamefule
Parish Priest