

HOMILY for CHRISTMAS – Year ABC

A little girl forgot her lines in a Christmas presentation. Her mother, sitting in the front row to prompt her, gestured and formed the words silently with her lips, but it didn't help. Her daughter's memory was blank.

Finally, she leaned forward and whispered the cue, "I am the light of the world."

The child beamed and with great feeling and a loud, clear voice said, "My mom is the light of the world."

If anything, Christmas reminds us that Jesus is the light of the world! Anyhow, if there is one thing that makes Christmas more festive than any religious and civic holidays is the usage of colorful lights for its decoration. You can see how decorative lights in church here or the homes & shopping malls put us in the festive mood and brighten up the whole world for Christmas. That is why some homes and public places like the Fifth-third Ballpark have used hundreds or thousands of colorful lights to decorate for the Christmas season and celebrate it. Besides putting us in the festive mood, lights also make us feel secured, confident, warm, uplifting, and hopeful. When we go to somewhere dark or dimly-lit, we will get scared and feel very anxious. For we will not be able to see where we are going or know anything dangerous that might be waiting for us. When we are in the dark, we feel disoriented, lost, confused, and miserable. That is how we see people of Ukraine have had to endure with its one-year-old war with Russia as their electrical system gets destroyed by Russian missiles & drones. Their whole country has been plunged into darkness, and that way of life has caused lots of miseries and suffering for its people.

If darkness or the lack of light can do that to our physical body, can you imagine what it might do to our mental and spiritual capability? If you have ever lost a loved one or gone through a divorce or a broken relationship, you would feel like you are living in a nightmare or walking through a dark night of the soul. For that lost or broken relationship leaves you in the dark and makes you feel quite depressed about your outlook in life. You might also feel overwhelmed by life burden & daily challenges as that dark cloud has overshadowed you. I'm sure you could name other life difficulties that would make your life miserable & put yourself in the world of darkness. Furthermore, if we look around the world these days, we would have to admit that there is so much darkness as we see many acts of hate & violence disrupt our peaceful, normal life. People do not hesitate to show hate, but we cannot find more acts of kindness & care. The level of violence & anger has gone through the roof lately. Our whole world is indeed emotionally & spiritually in darkness. It needs a savior to bring it the light & show it the way to peace & love. Otherwise, it will remain in darkness & continue to produce a lot of acts of hate & violence.

Like us, the people of God were suffering & in darkness. They had suffered under the yoke of slavery & occupation. They lost everything & had no future. They needed a savior to set them free from the yoke of slavery & darkness & help them to believe & hope again. The savior would bring them the light & show them the way to peace & love. Here is how the Christmas Gospel tells us about that special light, "...The real light which gives light to everyone was coming into the world. He was in the world & through him the world was made, yet the world did not know who he was. To his own, he came; yet his own did not accept him. Anyone who did accept him, he empowered to become children of God... The Word became flesh & made

his dwelling among us, & we have seen his glory: the glory of an only Son coming from the Father, filled with enduring love.” Apparently the light of Christ entered our world to help set it free from the bond of darkness, but our world did not recognize & welcome it. That is why our world remains in darkness & continues to produce acts of hate & violence. The light of Christ has not been able to bring our world its blessings & amazing power yet.

As we yearn to see the amazing power & blessings of that special light, I’m reminded of the spectacular pictures that the Hubble & James Webb space telescopes have captured of our universe. These telescopes have been able to peer into our dark universe & bring us some amazing images. Those images are fourteen or fifteen billion light years away. But, these special telescopes have been able to channel the light to travel that far and bring back some of the splendid pictures of our universe. If the light can do that to our dark, mysterious universe, can you imagine all the amazing things that the light of Christ will be able to bring to our dark world? It will be able to show our dark world first and foremost the way to peace & love. It will be able to bring our broken world the warm embrace of life & other wonderful blessings. However, the light of Christ can travel really far & do its amazing things only if each & every one of us would help carry it. Unless you have not known it yet, the reason the Hubble & James Webb space telescopes have been able to guide the light that far into our dark, mysterious universe & help capture those amazing images for us is because it has used many individual lenses & combined them to carry the light really far. Without those small, combined lenses, those telescopes would not be able to reflect that far away into our dark, mysterious universe & bring us many spectacular images. So, we are those small lenses of a spiritual telescope that help carry the light of Christ to our world of darkness & suffering. We can do all of that by arguing less, doing more kind things, helping out the misfortunate, bringing hope & comfort to the hopeless & the broken, welcoming strangers, visiting the sick & the elderly, or going an extra mile for someone. That is how we can reflect the light of Christ to our dark & broken world & bring it healing & hope.

My dear brothers & sisters, the people of God were in darkness & misery as they prayed for a savior to set them free from the yoke of slavery & bring them hope for a new life. God sent them a savior in the person of Jesus, but they could not recognize Him & remained in darkness. Thankfully, we now know who Jesus is. He is not only the savior for the people of God but also the light of the world. Tonight/today we welcome that light into our world. That light will show us the way out of darkness & bring us a new life of peace & love. But, the light of Christ cannot reach the four corners of the world unless we act together like the small lenses of the spiritual telescope & help reflect it. We do that by acting like Christ & showing His love to the world around us every day, & not just in the Christmas season. If each & every one of us is committed to that mission, I can assure you that our current world of darkness & suffering will soon disappear, & we will see a bright & loving world appear before us every day.