

## REFLECTIONS ON DARKNESS & LIGHT FOLLOWING EASTER

In a world where many ordinary people work hard to serve God daily, there are also terrorists, street gangs, rebels and even nations that focus on agendas that have little to do with God's plans. Given the opportunity to seize power they justify the use of many harsh tools to punish, to dominate or to destroy. Kidnapping, torture, targeted killing, denial of basic rights to women and others are favored tools for everything from a small cell of terrorists to some nations.

I know that I should be much optimistic since I write this just a few days after Easter—the most important day of the Christian year. Holy Week and Easter are reminders of God's ongoing love for everyone. Yet, somehow it's not enough for many of us.

What more does God have to do to demonstrate that God's love is able to lead us away from the need to control or destroy? The world is often a dark place where profits matter more than people, winning is everything and white people often act as if they are entitled to have whatever they want—including the right to carry guns openly—even into Church worship as is now legal in Texas.

In [John 1:5](#) the author proclaims his belief that there is a Light that came into the world through God's power. That light is here to show us the way out of our spiritual darkness into the light of God's love. According to John, "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness<sup>1</sup> did not overcome it."<sup>1</sup> Still, we avoid the Light.

My older son, Jim, an addictions counselor in Maine, offers some insight into part of the struggle with darkness. In his weekly blog on addiction he wrote this on 3/28/16:

"There are diseases that people fight silently and alone. Addiction, PTSD (post traumatic stress disorder) and depression are perhaps the most insidious of these. We know the fight cannot be overcome alone, but shame and fear hold us captive."<sup>2</sup>

Many of us know how dark the world is when we live with Addiction, PTSD or depression. Others find our lives darkened by abandonment, ridicule, hostility or denial of equality because of sex, race, gender preference, age, or state of health (especially mental health).

We even recognize these and other forms of darkness. In fact, some of us are so deeply mired in the darkness of our own inner life that we think there are no other choices. Why can't we recognize the Light? Has no one helped us to recognize God's light within us? Are we blinded by our fear of what God's presence may require of us? Or do we simply not believe in a loving God or even any God? A "Yes" to any of these three questions means that there is reason to seek God by making choices that will open us to the Light.

One source of Light is in reading The Bible, and yes it has been abused and grievously misused. It is not easily understood. It takes study—not just thumbing through it in hopes of finding a verse or two to solve our immediate need. Studying the Bible is one way to recognize the true Light that has come into the world.

Not every book in the Bible sheds the same light on our situation. Nor does every worship service, every sermon, every hymn or every sacrament. But taken together, they offer us varied and deeper opportunities to discover the power of the Light to heal us and form us into communities of Light.

I will return to this subject since there is obviously more to be considered.

Rev. Larry LaPierre

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