



Advent Reflection for Thursday, December 2

Erin McNaughton

You can listen to the reading and reflection by clicking [here](#).

John 1.6-9

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

As I work on my Advent reflection the light is fading in the day. It's 4:30, or a little before or a little after, and feels too early for it to be so dark, even in November. The light this time of year feels precious, something to be savored.

Twice in this short passage, the phrase "to testify to the light" is repeated. The repetition signals to me that this testimony was/is essential. The light (i.e. Jesus) comes into the world to enlighten everyone and key to enlightenment is the witness and testimony of the faithful.

I reflect on: where have I been faithful; where could I have been more faithful; where could I offer a better testimony or be a better witness? Have I reflected the light of Christ into the world, bringing light to others? Have I been a mirror held at some wonky angle, so the light was not reflected into the world but was lost?

I have lived in a very secular world and have not always carried my faith as a torch to illuminate my walk, but have tried to protect it. I was protective out of a fear of losing my light and my way. I held a fear that the darkness was so deep my light would be absorbed, and could not imagine it was a beacon to others. More recently, I feel emboldened; I check in through prayer and with my fellows, then choose to be a witness in my daily life.

Christ began his ministry when Israel was being brutally ruled by the Romans. He spoke truth to the power structures at play in society. He spoke to the everyday person. As an everyday person, I have Christ's example to guide me.

Learning and meditating on his example over the past 18 to 20 months, when joy felt scarce and small pleasures felt like huge bursts of hope, has caused me to testify to the light in ways I had not before: speaking to white colleagues about the importance of reflecting on race; pointing out a word choice or a phrase that could be hurtful to others; witnessing others' stories.

As society continues to reopen, I find myself choosing a path daily. Where is God guiding me today? As I make choices, I ask, what is aligned with what I've been learning through my studies with Holy Apostles? Am I increasing the sense of community? Building God's community? Am I sharing or reflecting the precious light of Christ into this world?

Erin McNaughton lives in the neighborhood with her dog Bella and cat Reina. Since 2019 she's been walking through the doors... or zooming in to... Holy Apostles. She is grateful for a community of active believers that regularly inspire her.

