



Lenten Reflection for Monday, April 4th

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

John 8:12 - 20

Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life." Then the Pharisees said to him, "You are testifying on your own behalf; your testimony is not valid." Jesus answered, "Even if I testify on my own behalf, my testimony is valid because I know where I have come from and where I am going, but you do not know where I come from or where I am going. You judge by human standards; I judge no one. Yet even if I do judge, my judgment is valid; for it is not I alone who judge, but I and the Father who sent me. In your law it is written that the testimony of two witnesses is valid. I testify on my own behalf, and the Father who sent me testifies on my behalf." Then they said to him, "Where is your Father?" Jesus answered, "You know neither me nor my Father. If you knew me, you would know my Father also." He spoke these words while he was teaching in the treasury of the temple, but no one arrested him, because his hour had not yet come.

"I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in the darkness but will have the light of life."

Like almost everyone else I encounter lately, my focus has been on my own hardships as well as the pain of the world. Paying attention to the difficult is not inherently a bad thing to do. Everywhere we look it seems that the negative aspects of our world are highlighted, and often need to be so we can mobilize and address the inequities of our society and the world at large.

And yet, I find I need to bring a lot of awareness to my tendency to focus on the disappointing and painful parts of life. If I am not careful I can feel like I am out in the ocean at night, just treading water, not sure where the shore is. It can be dark and lonely. In other words, I forget all about the light.

But here, in such beautiful simple language, Jesus reminds me that there is always light. This is not the "hope" of light, of better things to come. There is lightness right now, in this very moment of my life. It is up to me to see that light and follow it in order for the dark to be illuminated, understood, and ultimately integrated into my life so that the joy of God can also be ever present.

I have come to realize that this requires some action on my part and much more often than not it is very difficult indeed. If only the Holy Spirit moved me in all those dark moments to experience the glory of God right away!

Much more often than not, I stumble around, semi-aware that I have a choice, finally remembering that if I want the light of God, I must choose to follow, and turn towards that which invites me into this infinite love.

And when I can finally remember this, when I stop treading water and can actually see and then swim to the lighthouse beacon, I can be overwhelmed by the richness in this world that Jesus promised us in this passage.

The paths to following Jesus to this world are measureless. Perhaps the biggest source of light for me is being a part of, and staying engaged with, our church community. I am acutely aware of the abundance in the Holy Apostle's Education for Ministry Group I am a part of. Every week the nine of us bravely throw ourselves into theological reflection. At each meeting a group member brings in something for us to reflect on in myriad ways, often ending with the question "where do we see God in this?". We have reflected on photographs of abandoned factories with graffiti in Detroit, music and images from a gay dance club, scripture, hymns, a Leonard Cohen song, a clip from an Alvin Ailey ballet, a Martin Luther King Jr. speech, the song "Happy" and so much more. By reflecting with this group, I have weekly reminders of where I and others see the light of God. If I am out at sea at the beginning of group and forget to look for the lighthouse, I find it here, in this community.



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