

# “Christmas Light”

“The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned.”

Isaiah 9:2



Advent and Christmas are a season of dark and light. Among all the joy and festivity, this time of year can be very difficult for some people. Depression and suicide increase more than any other time of year. Loneliness and isolation prevent some folks from enjoying the Christmas season. Hymns and carols can elicit feelings of melancholy and make people withdraw. It is good then to be reminded of the words

from Isaiah that talk of the celebration of the light that comes into our own darkness.

The photo is from a torchlight procession that is held in Bridport on the South Coast each year, and the photo fails to capture the great number of people who turn up to take part in this procession. Everybody gathered in the town centre around 8pm just as the sun was setting, and after a while the excitement of the crowd stepped up a notch as the first candle was lit. Everyone started looking around to see who had the light so that they could get their torches lighted too. Gradually from that one light at the front grew a blaze of lights among the 10,000 strong crowd.

Watching the procession that went through the streets, it was evident that those who were holding torches, exhibited different behaviour than those who didn't.

Those who were holding the torches had a purpose and a plan and a destination. Those who weren't holding torches were merely spectators, standing and watching the procession go by, sometimes walking, sometimes stopping and looking in all directions.

Those who were holding the torches exuded a sense of pride almost in what they were doing and being part of something. They were more aware of those around them, being concerned of the danger involved with the fire, and being responsible in their behaviour with it.

Those who weren't, were standing on the edges, in the darkness, messing around and caught up in their own individual priorities and night-time festivities.

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Those who have the light are called not to keep the light not only for themselves, but to pass it on to others. And during the procession that evening there was a bit of breeze, and there were some latecomers to the procession. And during the procession, if someone's torch got extinguished, another would come and offer a light. If a latecomer came with a new torch, they would receive a flame from others around them.

When we hold God's light, we are to be a light, so that they too may receive the light. We are to help others on the journey to keep their lights lit. Those whose light may be extinguished by the wind and the storms, may receive light again from the companions on the journey. And those who come along new on the journey, may kindle their flame from those who have already travelled some distance.

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Advent surely is a mixed bag. It is a time of darkness. A time of pretty lights trying to brighten up our world. It is a time of waiting for that light which is to come, from which the darkness cannot hide. We are encouraged to hold onto that light, and look forward to that coming time.

As I watched the procession - it was a great opportunity to play with the settings on the camera. To alter the settings so that we may get different effects.

And when we alter the settings the pictures are transformed. If we increase the time our viewer is exposed to the light - we see those individual lights transformed into a flowing river of light. If we increase the amount of light we are exposed to, the radiance and brilliance of that light overcomes the darkness around it.



May we this Advent find time to allow ourselves to spend longer being exposed to the light. May we take in more of the light around us. So that we may too see the brilliance of Christ, the Light of the World, who comes to be with us.

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