

Dear friends

October – the nights are definitely drawing in and autumnal hues are making way for the falling leaves, a wintry nip in the air and a change of light as the season changes, but the light can still shine through its beauty, even in the darker days...

In spiritual terms, we tend to leave the imagery and metaphors for light until Advent and of course, it is especially strong at Christmas and the coming of Jesus, the light of the world, and again at Easter when we are reminded of God's inextinguishable light of Christ through the resurrection story.

Christians believe this light of Christ has been with us from the beginning. While it has become shrouded in the shadows and darkness of a broken world, the prophetic message and promise that began to trickle into being by prophets like Isaiah some 500 years before Jesus' birth, was intended to encourage people to hang on to a vision of a wonderful future lived out in the authentic light of love and peace, a light that will return and that will bring order and harmony once again.

*(The writings of Isaiah give an honest appraisal of how humanity has lost its way, but then encouragingly tell the people 'walking in the dark' not to give up hope - that God's saving plan to restore right light and life once again is taking shape and will be revealed. Indeed much of what happens in the life of Jesus was predicted in those words of promise and hope of Isaiah and is well-worth a read - '... **The people walking in darkness have seen a great light...**') (Isaiah ch9, v2)*

Have you ever noticed that there are certain people who really do have a great "light" about them? They bring good energy to the room, they are inspiring and affirming and they make people feel hopeful around them...

The psalms are full of laments and poems written by ordinary people telling stories and sharing thoughts of their ordinary lives. They are just like spiritual diaries and many talk of the hope and promise of God bringing the light of love and hope to their sometimes dark and troubled lives....

For example, psalm 36.7-9 says this: *'How precious is your steadfast love, O God! The children of humankind take refuge in the shadow of your wings... with you is the fountain of life; **in your light do we see light.**'* The writer is talking about natural light as the representation of a creator God – the 'true light' – and that in this light alone can we see true light for ourselves. Further reading and reflection of the psalm will tell us that the lamp of our body is our eyes – if we feel darkness inside, then even in the light and beauty around us, our eyes will only see darkness....

Have you noticed that when we are anxious things can seem heavy and dark, but when we feel more a peace and 'connected' inside, things get 'lighter' – literally....

I wonder what makes you feel more 'connected,' giving you more energy and more sense of life and more able to cope in the dark?

The first chapter of the Gospel of John says that 'Jesus, the 'true light, which gives light to everyone, [came] into the world' – 'in him was life, and the life was the light of humankind....'

Jesus is the prime example of what it means to know true spiritual light that shines through us and out into the world that we see and live in – a [holy] spirit of light that unites and connects us to one another. And furthermore, in faith, not only do we see light, we also become a light in the dark for others – living out a life of compassion and kindness and rallying for justice and fairness, caring and sharing.

Here's a thought....

We all believe and trust and have faith in the fact that - even though we don't always understand how electricity works - when we turn on a light-switch, light will appear in the room....

That is just how we can describe the Christian faith - Jesus is the light-switch and when we make a decision to believe and trust that – without really understanding how it works - and then put our faith into that idea, then *'the light-bulb' moment* can transform the way we see the world and the way we live in the world – the spiritual light begins to illuminate our world-view and actions, and is transformative for ourselves and those around us.

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. (Psalm 119.110)

Light is life – and life is love... In baptism, we light a baptism candle to symbolise the beginning of our spiritual journey of life, and during all the seasons of the spiritual calendar there are symbols and

prayers for candle-lighting for various milestones of life, right through to the end of our lives where a lighted candle symbolises perpetual and eternal light of love and life that enfolds around our dear departed, forever and ever....

And so, when we come to the end of October and the now much-commercialised dark-side Halloween on the 31st, let us remember the radiant light of goodness that was left by many holy saints and also the ordinary saints – people like you and me - who lived extraordinary lives, and let us celebrate and give thanks for them when we come to All Saints Day on the 1st and All Souls on 2nd November and on Sunday 3rd November, there is a chance to do both at our 10.30am service for All Saints – and our 3pm Service to Remember our Dear Departed...

May your coming days be filled with the light of love and peace, faith and hope....

Food for Thought...

Have you noticed that the exterior lights on many newer cars are smaller than they used to be? Many motorists are finding this difficult when driving in sunshine, as they still need to see what other cars are signalling to do.

But the arrival of LED light clusters means that car manufacturers have been fitting their indicator lights into much smaller spaces. And while that might look good, stylistically, it doesn't always work well. This is especially true when the car is in bright daylight, or when the car's indicator lights are set near to a brake or taillight.

The current regulations only legislate for colour, lighting intensity and viewing angle. Surprisingly, there are no rules about how big the actual surface area of the indicator light should be. What do you think...?