

# In a dark world, we are sons, daughters of light

written by Bishop Anthony B. Taylor |

The events we celebrate today can be summarized by a single phrase: "The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it." We find this phrase in the prologue of John's Gospel (1:5) and it finds fulfillment in the events of Jesus' death and resurrection.

So we began this service outside in the darkness. We lit the Easter fire, basked in its light and from that fire we lit the Easter candle. We entered a darkened Church and our deacon lifted that candle high and proclaimed three times: "The light of Christ!" to which we responded, "Thanks be to God!"

Then we proceeded to light our own candles, spreading the light from the Easter candle representing Jesus' resurrection throughout the Church, giving every single one of us a share in that light which the darkness could not overpower. And then our cantor sang the Exultet, the Easter proclamation, giving voice to the joy of all creation that this is the night in which the darkness of night and sin and death has been overcome.

Then we put out our candles and took time to remember. We were once again shrouded in darkness as we read of God's great deeds in the Old Testament, a time of darkness but God was never absent. Then the lights came on when we proclaimed the Good News of Jesus' resurrection. We rang the bells and lit the altar candles and sang the Gloria and Alleluias again for the first time since the beginning of Lent.

From that point on, there is to be no more darkness in our service. We go from light to greater light. We will baptize those who today through baptism will be united to Jesus in his death and resurrection, dying to this world of sin and now "living for God in Christ Jesus." We will re-light our own candles and renew our own profession of faith, and then receive into the Church those already baptized Christians who today along with the newly baptized will receive the sacrament of confirmation and join us in receiving the Eucharist for the first time. And with that our joy will be complete.

But you know, when we leave this Church tonight, we go back out into a very dark world. The same was true for those first believers 2,000 years ago.

Jesus broke the power of sin; evil did its worst, but it could not defeat him. He continued to forgive and respond with love no matter what. He broke the power of sin, but the reality of sin remained. Human weakness still remained, Satan the father of lies still prowled the world seeking the ruin of souls — and of nations. The Romans still oppressed the Jews. Over the course of the last 2,000 years the players have changed and the issues have evolved, but the fact of darkness remains an ever-present reality in our own personal lives, in our families, in our nation and throughout our world.

But you and I are called to be sons and daughters of the light. It is as such that Jesus sends us forth to bring the light we experience today to others. Light is not supposed to be left behind at the Church door when we return to what is falsely called "the real world." The real world is the Kingdom of God. Everything else is provisional, passing away, going to end. But Jesus through

his resurrection has broken not only the power of sin, but also the power of death.

So fear should no longer have such power over us. "If God is for us, who can be against us?" Actually a lot of people. They did nail Jesus to a cross, after all. But in the end they will not prevail because Jesus has risen victorious and we share in that victory.

"The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it." Let us now welcome into that light those who have been preparing themselves this last year for their share in Jesus' victory through the sacraments of baptism, confirmation and Eucharist. And may the rest of us renew our commitment to let the light of our faith shine 24/7 because we know that in the end "the light is stronger than the darkness" and we are sons and daughters of the light.

***Bishop Anthony B. Taylor delivered this homily on Holy Saturday, April 8.***