

More Light

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Trinity Church in the City of Boston
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Mehr Licht! Mehr Licht! Goethe, the great German poet, is said to have cried out as he was dying. Mehr Licht! In case you don't know German, it means more light, more light. People have always debated, was he saying, I need more light because it's getting dark? Or was he saying, I see more light than I've ever seen before. Either way, more light, don't we know that we need more light? When times are dark, when our sons and daughters dash themselves to the ground, either literally or figuratively, or the sons and daughters of others around the world are dashing themselves to the ground, don't we know that we need more light. And don't we wonder where the light will come from. Where are we going to get what we need for the healing of the world? Today, in the gospel you've just heard, the good news that gets proclaimed is that Jesus comes to bring that light in His very person. He is transfigured. They see Him for who He is. No longer can there be any doubt. This is not just an everyday human being, this is not just a great teacher or even a great healer, this man, this man has God's light shining from Him.

There are two ways in which we need this light. First, we need this light to reveal to us our true natures. Not only do we need to see who Christ truly is, we need to know who we truly are. Think about the darkness in your own life when you are confused about who you are. I hope that most of you aren't confused at the moment, but most of us, at one time or another, most notably in our teenage years perhaps, are confused. Who am I really? What am I here for? What is life all about? And the light that shines from Christ first, calls us to a recognition of who we really are. And the good news, not only for those being baptized today, but for all of us, is that the light that we see in Christ is also shining in our own hearts if we would just turn and see it. Will we turn and see it?

Now you might be asking, well how am I supposed to turn and see it? Christ, the light, is also the guide who shows us how. The light that was revealed from Him was revealed as he was praying. If you are confused now or at some time in the future, about who you really are, what your meaning is and why you are here, Christ invites you and me to pray, to see the light more deeply. This prayer will not be an all at once thing. And the seeing will not be an all at once thing, any more than these infants and young children, who are being baptized today, will see all at once who they are. As we pray, as we ask for Christ's light, the light dawns. Slowly, surely, as we see more and more clearly, who we are, what we are called to do, what we are called to do. But we need light, not just so that we can see who we are and what we are here for, but we also need light from Christ to guide us in how to then, be and do. So Christ calls us to the light and Christ also calls us to live as light in the world. Later in this service you will hear each of these children be told, receive the Light of Christ and take it into the world. So first we receive the light of Christ, first we begin to see who we are, what God has made us to be and do and then we carry that light with us into the world for the sake of others.

This is where it gets a little tricky. So often the church talks about our ministry as all of the baptized as if it takes place in only two places. One is here within the walls of the church, through the ministries of the baptized at worship or in church committees. Then we also talk in a second way about the light that we carry into the world in social justice ministries, like feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, seeking homes for the homeless. But think for a moment about what your life really revolves around. For most of us, we spend most of our time in our households and at work. We do not spend most of our time in these walls or in social justice ministry situations. How is the light of Christ to be revealed in your household? It is a challenge to love a child when a child is discovering who that child is and is climbing and falling, is throwing food around the room, is screaming, is saying no not your way, my way. How do we show the light of Christ to children who are testing their own wills? How do we show the light of Christ to those who are our primary others, our spouses, our partners, our closest friends? Is it just by being there in the light times at the top of the mountain? Or will we go with them down into the darkness of the valley when they are convulsed, when we are convulsed and we need some kind of reconciliation.

That is not easy work friends; it is the work of Christ. Can you call on Christ's light, not just for these children today, but for yourselves, to be light in your households? Or how about in your workplace? Or if you're younger and your workplace is school, in your school setting. That place where we spend our working hours, how to be the light of Christ there? Will you notice the person on the way to the water cooler who looks particularly down today or will you turn away? Will you stop and say to that person, you know, you look down are you OK? Or will you say they need their privacy, all the while saying I need my privacy. What about the person who drives you crazy in your workplace? We all have them don't we? Yes, even here at Trinity we all have them. I imagine I drive some people crazy here. How are we to be Light of Christ to those that we drive crazy and how are we to be Light of Christ to those who drive us crazy? The one thing I will say to you is that you cannot do it by yourself. But perhaps prayer is the starting place again, to pause before you respond to the one who drives you crazy or the one that you know you drive crazy. To pause for the length of the Lord's Prayer. To see if some other response comes to mind than the first one, to see what light shines in you for driving away darkness. Each of these children whom we baptize today will need to learn how to carry the light of Christ. They will learn it primarily from their parents and their god-parents. But they will also learn it from us by our prayer and by our witness. How will you let the light of Christ guide you this week? Can you find one moment in your household and one moment in your workplace where you look for the light of Christ to guide you? How will you carry that light to others? The children who are being baptized today await your answer. Christ awaits your answer. The world in need of light awaits your answer. Amen.