

# ***A VOCATION IN THE DARKNESS***

*Father James Chelich - 2021*

*You are the light of the world.  
A city set on a mountain cannot be hidden,  
Nor do they light a lamp and then put it under a bushel basket;  
it is set on a lampstand, where it gives light to all in the house.  
Just so, your light must shine before others,  
that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father.  
Matthew 5:14-16*

Jesus' words announce and call us to a vocation: to be light in the world. Almost no one, however, stops to ask the question: Why light? Why a lamp? Think about it. You don't need light if the day is sunny, clear and bright. You don't need a lamp if the room is flooded with light. You only need light if it is an overcast night. You only need a lamp if the room is dark. What darkness are we talking about?

We, human beings, weave a veil of darkness, violence and sadness for ourselves. We weave it right in the midst of a world of light and life, for creation's abundant beauty and goodness surrounds us. Christian Faith helps us to see that we weave this veil out of threads we spin from the dark and shadowy things we hold in our minds and hearts: fear and anger towards anyone, bitterness and resentment about anything, envy and lust, the lingering guilt of sins committed, and the memory of abuse received. It is out of these dark and shadowy things that each day, in word and action, we spin dark threads of excess, jealous outbursts and resentment; threads of lies, marginalization, and exclusion; threads of mockery, humiliation and isolation; threads of anger, cruelty and violence. We weave these dark threads together with dark threads spun by others into a veil of darkness so tight that we can no longer see the beauty and goodness of creation that surrounds us day and night. This veil blinds us to any beauty and goodness in our fellow human beings or in ourselves. It leaves us to live out our days in an ever deepening sadness. In the end, it is death to the human spirit and a human world.

The Christian Vocation Jesus calls us to, *presumes* a world locked in darkness, just as needing a lamp, *presumes* the room is dark. It is understandable that people would complain about the darkness, even while they contribute to making it dark. The darkness we weave is painful, disorienting and destructive both of the human body, soul and spirit, and the goodness and beauty in the world around us. What is unspeakably sad is that Christians complain about the darkness. In essence they are complaining about their own vocation and complaining about the fact that Jesus called them to be a light in the world. To be a Christian is to repent of sin, to repent of weaving darkness. This means that a Christian knows where it comes from and, more importantly, knows that they have been, in part, responsible for it. This knowledge and awareness should motivate, not complaining about the darkness, but ambition to be the light. Jesus describes his own vocation as a vocation to the darkness:

*I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness,  
but will have the light of life. John 8:12  
No disciple is superior to the teacher; but when fully trained,*

*every disciple will be like his teacher. Luke 6:40*

To be the light is not complicated or difficult to learn:

Walk with Jesus

Forming a Personal Relationship with Jesus \*

Learn the art of Having Faith in Others

Having Faith in Another \*

Learn the art of Conversation that Invites Communion

Listening, Conversation and Communion \*

*Your light must shine before others,  
that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father.*

\* These three short reflections are found on our Parish Website:

MENU → *FATHER JIM'S TEACHINGS* → *TEACHINGS FOR ADVENT*