

Saint Joseph's Church



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Weekly Parish Bulletin

SUNDAY READINGS PERSPECTIVE Light from Light

This incident occurred a long time ago, just before I was ordained. For some reason—why I cannot remember—I had been chosen to give the Easter Vigil homily at the hugely packed College Church at Saint Louis University.

There was a complication, of course. I was scheduled to be on my ordination retreat at the very same time.

No problem. I rode in with four other Jesuits from the retreat place, way out in the countryside, into the city, into the church, into the sacristy, into an alb and stole, and out to the altar. Needless to say I was very nervous, since I had only given a few homilies before in my whole life.

It happened that a huge thunderstorm had struck just the night before. I had watched it through the high plate glass doors of the retreat house. If you are tired of rain or snow all over this country, you may no longer see what used to be the beauty of our rainstorms. Dark rain pouring down, unexpected volcanic lightning flashes, blistering forth in naked power. Every single smallest detail of the landscape visible for seconds, as if twenty thousand florescent lights had suddenly flashed on and then off again.

This tremendous power dwarfed me.

It reminded me of what God had told the prophet: "Do not look at me directly as I pass by; the sight is too much for your eyes" (Ex 33:20). In other words, we are too small for such brilliance.

I found a much more humane version of light at Easter Vigil. The Easter Candle of course was lighted from the fire at the back, and the large assembly lit their small tapers gradually from its flames.

Since I was in the sanctuary, I could witness for the first time this soft light spreading forth from countless miniature candles, combining the crowd into a gentle oneness, a hearth of human faces, wrinkles forgiven. *Continued...*

Welcome to St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church

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Light from Light

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This comforting glow made each face a vessel which held deep inside itself the quiet being of the person and of the Lord.

Such a contrast: thunderous power, followed so quickly by warmth, love, small light. It enacted the true contrast between God's transcendent greatness—too much for human eyes—and Jesus' quiet love. Jesus absolved wrinkles and crippled legs and unseeing eyes. He is our glimpse of the awe-filled intensity of God-the-infinite, but through our tiny, finite eyes. Jesus is God and also one of us. He is lightning turned into candle glow.

Alright, you say, that is very interesting, but what about Lent and this week's Gospel? Well, in his transfiguration, Jesus, who was quiet light, reversed himself and showed up as God the infinite fire. My mere encounter with lightning was nothing compared to this.

Why such a transformation?

One appealing speculation would be that at the very centre of each bolt of lightning is the same stuff that gently caresses our faulty faces and makes them glow.

God does not extinguish his own light. But he can filter it and offer it to anyone who will look.

John Foley, SJ

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

St Paul assures us that 'God is for us.' Therefore, we give voice to our needs and hopes, confident that the God who loves us will hear us.

For the Church: that our truest selves, beloved daughters and sons of God, may be revealed more and more through our Lenten observances, **let us pray to the Lord.**

For a spirit of holy detachment: that as we recognize more fully that our time, knowledge, possessions, and even life itself are gifts from God, we may place these wholeheartedly at the service of God and our neighbour, **let us pray to the Lord.**

For all who are called to self-sacrifice: that God will give them the strength to lay down their lives in witness to the Gospel and in loving service to those in need, **let us pray to the Lord.**

For all the children of Abraham: that through our witness to the one True God, we may manifest God's justice and virtue in our world, **let us pray to the Lord.**

For all who assist us through difficult times: that God will renew them, give them strength, and guide their words and deeds, **let us pray to the Lord.**

For healing: that God will relieve the suffering of all who are ill, restore their strength as they recover, and guide all who are caring for them, **let us pray to the Lord.**

For all who have died: that the coming of Christ may open for them the eternal joy and peace of God's presence forever, **let us pray to the Lord.**

For the petitions we hold in our hearts, that they be united with those of Mary the Mother of God, our patron Joseph and all the saints in light, **let us pray to the Lord.**

Faithful God, we look to you in our need and listen closely to hear your voice. Bless us as the descendants of your servant Abraham and hear these prayers we make today in the name of your Son and our Saviour, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen