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Light in Darkness

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Light in Darkness

If we bring to a place that is quite dark even a small battery-powered light, we will be able to see a doorway or anything close to hand. And no matter how little a light-source might be, on a really dark night it will be visible from quite a distance away. In the night sky, the identification lights on airliners can easily be seen though the lights may not be very powerful.

We do not have to be extraordinary individuals to bring notable, helpful illumination to human situations where there is the darkness of suffering, ignorance, or a lack of trust, hope or love. Just as a bit of illumination is all we need in order to see a door lock on a dark night, we do not have to do any more than provide a small measure of encouragement to be of real help to someone whose prospects had previously seemed completely dark.

We know that the pre-Christmas season is not primarily about the cards and gifts and parties themselves, much less the acquisition of material possessions, but is about our motives for all that we say and do. Implicitly, all our efforts on behalf of others bring light, enabling them and us to experience more deeply the love that can be brought into even the darkest places in our lives. The brief notes we write, all the gestures of thoughtfulness, every gift of our presence to and for others is light. We may not know whether the words and deeds we send forth with a good intention will be as noticeable to a particular recipient as a tiny candle in a totally dark room, or will be as unnoticeable as one more light in a fully illuminated space. We only need to know that we have something in our hearts that we want to communicate to others, whether or not it is acknowledged as a gift of love.

Each and every day we have many opportunities to bring light into darkness, instead of a word of criticism, unnecessarily shared bad news, or any of those annoying and hurtful words, looks and actions of which people are capable and that darken human hearts. Reminding ourselves every so often that this season is preparation for Christmas evokes in us a desire to favor joy over sadness and to alleviate burdens rather than to ignore them. The commercial and secular aspects of consumerist culture do not enhance or support our desires to be light in darkness, but neither can advertising or superficial images interfere with our calling as members of the human family who believe that love, not money or material possessions, "makes the world go 'round."

The real Christmas story began in us long before Thanksgiving or even Halloween. We are not moving toward a surprise on December 25 as if we did not already know that God loves us so wildly and enthusiastically that

only by becoming one of us can this great love be satisfied. This kind of love has been and is still within us, around us and among us. We have only to let our light shine in union with the Original Light in Darkness, thereby fulfilling the real meaning of Christmas.