

### Fifth Ordinary Sunday--2023

The other night, I went outside my home. It was almost midnight, and it was cold—and fresh—and absolutely clear, the stars burning so brightly they seemed to crackle. I was looking for the comet—the Green Comet—as some people have been calling it—or as others have been saying, The Stone-Age Comet, because the last time it swept the heavens, it was more than 50,000 years ago.

Just then, my telephone dinged. I had a text. It was from my friend in Texas. “Where are you,” he texted. I said I was outside. He said he was outside, too, and looking up for the comet. “It’s warmer here,” he said. I texted: “Very funny!” I kept looking and peering and squinting into that darker area between the Little Dipper and the Big Dipper. Then, my phone rang. I found it!” my friend said. “It’s just down from the Big Dipper and a little to the right!”

And then—I, too—saw it: a needle-sized, green glow with a short tail.

And that magical, pinpoint light had traveled 26-million miles to reach me—had pierced the night sky to touch my eyes and help me marvel at the heaven’s grandeur, its vastness, and its mystery. That green, gemlike light was beautiful and stirring and seemed absolutely holy to me.

And, suddenly, I thought:

“This beautiful light in all this immense darkness relates directly to our weekend Gospel, that light-of-the-world part of our Gospel that reminds us what we are called to be. We are called to be light. We are called to light up the night. In a world that right now seems often to be more night than day, we are called as Christians to receive the light of Christ and then shine it on no matter the depth of the world’s darkness around us—no matter the distance that might come between us and others through our stubborn pride and prejudice.

We are called directly by Jesus to BE his light—in other words, to be his love, his care, and his hope.

In fact, at our Baptisms, we received that light for the first time

It was held for us in the form of a candle, and, as a result, we have always been challenged to keep finding it ourselves and to show it to others as much as possible.

Jesus said: “A good person out of the store of the goodness in his heart produces good.”

We can put that another way: “A person who does that shines light.”

As we pray together today, we can pray that God’s grace will help us to do that—because the world needs our Christ light.

It so desperately needs the hope we have through him. And it so urgently needs our reassurance of his Resurrection—our confidence that in spite of everything, there is life—that in spite of everything, his light shines on.

Now, it may sometimes seem to be hard to find in that deep, vast darkness that can occasionally overtake our lives, but, you know, it’s there. It’s there, shining and flashing away like that sweet, green comet. And while the comet will eventually go away, our Christ light is always there. We just need to keep looking for it. We need to keep seeing it. And...we need to keep shining it on.

Please give it some thought. In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit....

