

Jesus is our light in spite of the darkness of the world.

According to John 8:12, Jesus said: *"I Am the light of the world"*.

This is one of seven "I AM" statements of Jesus. By calling himself "I AM." in the way God did when he revealed himself to Moses at the burning bush, Jesus claims to be God, yes to be God's equal. He claims to be a person of the holy Trinity. Remember the words of Ps. 27: 1: "The Lord is my light and my salvation". Jesus is claiming the same thing about himself that the psalmist says about the God of Israel.

"I am the light of the world." John's Gospel talks a lot about light. Of the seventy-two times that the Greek word for "light" appears in the New Testament, thirty-three of them are in John's Gospel. Think a moment what these words meant if you lived during the times of Jesus. Then light was something you had during daylight hours. There were no power stations, no electricity, no batteries and no gas. It means that all knew and recognised the importance of Jesus' claim to be the light of the world. Light shining in darkness was a precious, sought after commodity. Light prevents falling, getting hurt, getting lost, getting robbed!

Jesus was sent as a light into the world to save the world from darkness:

(Jn 8:12) "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

(Jn 12:46) "I have come into the world as a light, so that no one who believes in me should stay in darkness."

During the Lenten season we rejoice that Jesus is the light. We rejoice that Jesus frees us from the hold of darkness and brings us into the light. We celebrate that if we follow Jesus we will be delivered from the perils of darkness. We are safe in the light of Christ. If you want to live, to really live, you must be in the light, who is Christ. If you want to live, to live forever, you must come to Christ.

Yet, says John, (Jn 3:19-21) *"Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light, because their deeds were evil. (20) Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. (21) But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light ..."*

Jesus is the light of the world. But by nature, people love darkness more than light, because their deeds are evil. Without Christ, darkness is in your heart and in my heart and, without Christ, darkness is where we love to stay. Deep inside we are ashamed of who we really are. We hope that darkness will cover the shame of our own dark thoughts, words, attitudes and deeds. We fear judgment as a result of the darkness of our hearts and hope that the darkness of the world will cover our transgressions. We fool ourselves into thinking that if we remain in darkness, God will not know who we really are.

To be in "darkness" means not to know God and Christ. To "walk in darkness" means to regulate one's life according to the darkness, and to conduct one's life by the darkness. The unsaved world fears the light, because light chases the darkness away. Light exposes our deep inner shame, because of our longing to remain immoral, selfish and greedy. Darkness wants us to believe that we do not have to change, to repent or be honest with ourselves and with God about how lost we became living without Christ.

The unbelieving society rejects Christ and remains in the darkness. And, in that darkness it will be forever lost,
until it comes to the light, who is Christ.