

December 13, 2023



Daily Reflections

DON'T LET THE LIGHTS GO OUT

By Julie Mussché

Of Light and Dark

"Even in darkness it is possible to create light and encourage compassion."

ELIE WIESEL

Reflection

As I am writing this, my household is planning a Hanukkah gathering. As you read this reflection, the festival of lights is tapering down. Last month, during Thanksgiving week, the Roman Catholic Daily Readings shared the story of Hanukkah as unfolded through First and Second Maccabees. It is a story of conquest, violent oppression, and cruelty, attempts to destroy the Jewish religion and its traditions and practices, and ultimately, full acculturation. It is also a narrative featuring God's faithfulness, the fight for freedom, and the miracle of the eight days' rededication of the Temple in Jerusalem.

Celebrating Hanukkah has been a part of my life for almost 30 years.

Festivities are relaxed and fun, and bring family and friends together. Traditional foods such as latkes and *sufganiyot* (jelly doughnuts) are plentiful, gifting is optional and not required. There's candle lighting, and candle holders can be unique to each household and person.

One of the traditions that has deeply imprinted on my memory is that households are encouraged, if safe, to light the candles next to a mezuzah at the front door, or to place the lighted candles in a window. These practices certainly resonate with the holiday's chronicle.

During this season of many traditions and celebrations, let us pray for peace and freedom and efficacy for all peoples. If one were to create a word cloud representing the spirit of the season, what are the words that would bubble up for you? Peace, hope, joy, love, compassion, miracles, redemption, fun, family - what else? May the light of the season be with you.



Lit Candles
Photo by Julie Mussché

For Pondering

You are invited to create a personal word cloud for the season. What comes up for you and what is the message you received?

For Prayer

There are many songs of the season blossoming out of a variety of traditions. Is there a certain piece of music that inspires and lights your heart up? One of my favorites is “Light One Candle” by Perter, Paul and Mary, and “Christ Be Our Light” sung by Bernadette Ferrell. What is your special holiday song? The encouragement: spend some time listening and signing it as an offering of praise to God.

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