

February 28, 2025

Daily Reflections



LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE

By Julie Mussché

A Bible Verse

“This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.”

1 JOHN 1:5

Reflection

While celebrating a friend’s birthday recently, a group of us visited Mission San Juan Capistrano. The oldest continuously utilized structure in California, “The Jewel of the Missions” echoes a complicated history. The Mission Basilica of San Juan Capistrano is designated a National Shrine by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops; it is a special place resonating with the intersection of the sacred and the temporal. The tragedy of colonial assimilation of the Acjachemen peoples contrasts with the conversion of many souls to Christianity, a paradoxical actuality.

These ponderings bubbled up for me as we wandered around the Mission grounds exploring the remains of the ancient stone sanctuary and gardens. Our group decided to search for the Serra Chapel, the oldest church in the state. Making our way past the Bell Wall and entering the Saint Serra Exhibit, it seemed we moved into darkness as we first entered the church and passed by the St. Peregrine's side chapel.

Quite suddenly the altar seemed bathed in light. It was a stunning sight, the golden retablo gleaming softly with sunlight. Progressing closer to the altar, I started to name the saints in the side niches. I spotted a nun with a lantern and realized that she was familiar because she is my patron saint, St. Catherine of Siena. For some reason, this gave me enormous comfort.

All of this led me to give consideration to the scriptural and spiritual context of light and darkness as symbols for good and evil, right and wrong action. A number of words sparked my psyche: "And God said, 'Let there be light'" (Genesis 1:3); "Let your light shine." (Matthew 5:16); "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life." (John 8:12); dark night of the soul, and "things that go bump in the night." An odd combination but recognizable. Did any of the words evoke any feelings as you read them?

There is something very visceral and primitive about our understanding of light and darkness, a basic thing like being able to see and navigate safely into the unknown. Does this not just capture the essence of the spiritual journey as we pilgrim toward the light of God? May your light shine brightly!



San Juan Capistrano - Serra Chapel
Photo by Julie Mussché

For Pondering

- How do you define light and darkness in a spiritual context?
 - What ignites your spirit to shine brightly as a beacon of God's presence?
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For Prayer

*Light of my life,
thank you for shining brightly with hope and love.
Please brighten my path through times of darkness
and shine out your love to all.*

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