

Dear Saint Bernard Family,

I'm writing to you as I reflect on the events that happened yesterday in our nation.

On Sunday we and many in the Christian world celebrated the wonderful Feast of the Epiphany. Yesterday, January 6th, the rest of the Christians in the world celebrated this wonderful feast. At Epiphany we acknowledge that Jesus Christ was born as a "light for all nations" and not just for a select few people in the world. Deacon Ted Marks spoke a lot about Christ, The Light of the World, in his wonderful homily this past weekend. To summarize his words: There were (and are) some who follow(ed) the light to find and serve Jesus (the Magi, the shepherds, Jesus' Mother, St. Joseph, St. John the Baptist, the Apostles, and the disciples then and now.) There were some who chose (choose) not to serve and follow Christ's light (King Herod, the Pharisees, Scribes, religious and political leaders, and sometimes us who know that serving and following Jesus would (will) cause them to have to change their lives and their priorities.)

Following Christ our Light takes prayer and means total commitment. To follow Christ our Light means letting His Light of Truth shine into our minds, our hearts, and our lives to reveal the darkness of sin, selfishness, lies, hard-heartedness, resistance, hatred, and death. Once His Light reveals those evils then it's our turn to confess them and reject them also, and then ask for Christ's Light to replace them with His grace, mercy, truth, forgiveness, generosity, love and life.

This is a continual process for us faithful disciples of Jesus Christ. We can't ever rest from letting Christ's Light shine into our souls to help us rid ourselves of sin and death and help us be people who shine like Christ with grace, joy, love and life.

What does the Light of Christ have to do with what happened (is happening) in our country? What happened in Washington, D.C. (and other parts of our country) yesterday was not only unlawful and unpatriotic. It was sinful and immoral. It also shows us how sin and believing a lie can get us to believe that a lie is the truth, and that sin and lies can cause chaos and death. This sin of selfishness and hatred of one another has been repeated and blared a lot over the last few years, sadly by our nation's leaders, some of our religious leaders, and many others. But it has been going on a lot longer than that in our nation and the world. That lie began World War II. That lie was the reason for our Civil War. It happens every time we decide that my rights are more important than yours and my freedoms are more important than your life. That lie is the reason why some are poor and hungry and some are wealthy and comfortable, why some are allowed to live freely in our country and in our world and why some are told you're not welcome here, why there are different "bars" of justice for some than for others, why some are allowed to be born and some are killed before they have a chance to live, why some can commit crimes and be slapped on the wrist, or be pardoned, and why some "legally" can have their lives snuffed out through state sponsored abortion, capital punishment, and war.

God creates every human being in His own image and likeness. Jesus came into our world to offer God's love, mercy, grace, redemption, and eternal life to the whole human race. Prayer and God's grace reminds us of this faithful fact. God is Love, as St. John wrote. In God there is no darkness. In order for us to rid ourselves of darkness and hate we must go to our Lord in prayer often to let God's light and love shine on us and through us. It's time to pray. It's time to pray hard.

We will facilitate prayer here at St. Bernard Church. From today through at least January 24th the Church will be open to pray in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament daily. Every day the Sacrament of Christ's Body and Blood will be exposed on the altar after the morning Mass(es) or by 9:30AM on the mornings we do not have morning Mass (Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday). The Blessed Sacrament will stay exposed until at least 5PM each day. On Thursday the Church will be open for prayer until 6PM, we will end exposition at 3:30PM on Saturday. We will have no Benediction ritual though.

Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. said, "Darkness cannot drive out darkness. Only light can do that. Hatred cannot drive out hatred. Only love can do that." Let us pray and work to dedicate ourselves to the Light of the World and the God of Love.

Peace,

Fr. Chucks