

Daily Mass – May 6, 2020  
Saint Mary's Catholic Church, Richmond VA  
Fr. Michael Renninger

*"Then one foggy Christmas eve, Santa came to say,  
Rudolph with your nose so bright, won't you guide my sleigh tonight..."*

When I was a little boy, that was one of my favorite Christmas songs. In fact I remember a particular Christmas even when my brother and I drove mom crazy by singing that song *over and over again* as we came home from Church.

It was the first year that we had twinkle lights on our Christmas tree. Up to that point, we had those old fashioned light bulbs that you would screw into the wires. But this particular year, dad broke down and bought white twinkle lights. We even bought a special Angel 'tree topper' that had twinkle lights inside of it.

When we got home from church, my brother and I stopped in the kitchen to raid the Christmas cookies. Suddenly we heard mom screaming in the living room. Leo, our cat, had climbed the tree, and was chewing on the angel.

"Stop the cat," my mom shouted. But dad just stood there and said, "The cat is about to learn an important lesson." And with that, the cat bit into the wire. A flash of light occurred! The entire string of lights fizzled, and the cat went flying from the tree and landed on top of Baby Jesus. I'm not sure who was more surprised – the cat, or Jesus...

Because the cat had bit the wire, all of the lights on our tree were now... dark. While my brother and I thought that it was cool that the cat had almost been electrocuted, we were very disappointed that our tree was dark on Christmas eve. My brother asked, "Will it stay dark tomorrow?"

We went to bed, with visions of flying cats dancing in our heads, but also with a heavy question – "Will it stay dark tomorrow.?"

What we did not know was this – even as we went to bed, our dad went to work. He figured out how to fix the string of lights. I don't know how long it took him. But the next morning, when my brother and I ran down the steps to see what Santa had delivered, we were greeted with a surprise. The twinkle lights were shining brightly. We went to bed asking, "Will it stay dark tomorrow?" But the tree was not dark. The light was shining.

We hear about many things in today's readings. IN the first reading, we hear how the earliest Christians were willing to anywhere if it gave them a chance to tell other people about Jesus.

In the Gospel, we hear how Jesus came to share with us the message that his Father gave him. God the Father sent Jesus to tell all of us that we are loved, and that our lives here on earth are important, and that we are invited to spend eternity with God. Jesus did not come to condemn us – he came to save us.

And in the midst of today's Gospel, Jesus says these words:

“I came into the world as light, so that everyone who believes in me does not have to remain in darkness.”

Jesus came to be our light. Jesus is our light. Jesus does not want us to ever think that the darkness will keep coming back, tomorrow, and the day after that, and the day after that.

In other words, Jesus wants us to know that whenever we face a difficult time, and time that feel dark and dreary, there is always a reason to hope.

Jesus wants us to know that if we ever ask each other, “Will it still be dark tomorrow,” Christians know that the darkness does not win. The light starts to shine. We have a reason to hope.

And that reason is... Jesus.

Right now, many of us may be asking, “Will it still be dark tomorrow?” Something feels a bit strange in our world, doesn't it? No, the cat hasn't bit a wire. But things are not the way we want them to be.

We have to stay at home. We can't see our friends. We can't go to a restaurant. We can't come to Saint Mary's for church. You can't go to school and see your friends. It all feels so strange.

And it has been feeling strange for a while. We are all trying to be patient, but it is hard to stay patient, week after week.

And perhaps we are starting to feel gloomy. Maybe we are wondering if this strange experience will ever end? Maybe we're asking the question my brother asked on Christmas eve: “Will it still be dark tomorrow?”

But the good news is that God is at work, and God knows what we need, and God is with us at every step of this journey.

And that God has sent Jesus into the world to be the light, even when it feels a little dark for us. God is at work, and the light of Christ always shines through.

Remember, Jesus went into the darkest possible place – after his crucifixion, he was buried in a dark tomb. But on Easter Sunday morning, the tomb was empty, and the light of the resurrection was shining.

And that light never fades. So if Jesus' light could shine forth from a tomb, then we know that his light can shine for us, right here, right now.

So look for his light. It's already shining.

Oh, and one more thing – keep an eye on your cat...