

GROW + GO

LET THE LIGHT *of* CHRIST SHINE *in the* WORLD

As the father of four young children, I am routinely subjected to the mild torture of car rides filled with the dulcet tones of children's songs. Sure, "Silly Songs with Larry" and the occasional Disney anthem prompt my voice to join the cacophony emanating from the back seats, but mostly I just remind myself that we all have crosses to bear, and God can bring good out of any situation. However, the other day, the Holy Spirit pricked my heart when the well-known and surprisingly profound "This Little Light of Mine" came blasting through the speakers. Take a moment and sing it in your head, thus ensuring it will be stuck there until Jesus returns. "This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine ... hide it under a bushel? NO, I'm gonna let it shine ... let it shine, let it shine, let it shine."

As we approach the Christmas season, there is no better song for us to be singing since it succinctly reminds us of what we are truly celebrating.

The Gospel of John does not contain a Christmas narrative. John dives right in with 18 straight verses

designed to inspire and remind the reader of what the rest of the book is all about. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God ... through him was life, and the life was the *light of the human race*, the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it." (Jn 1:1, 4-5) Jesus' entrance into the human experience as the Word made flesh, which culminates in his death and resurrection, begins in Mary's womb. We had no hope of life, but the Incarnation changes everything. Jesus is the Light of the World because we who were once trapped in sin's darkness now see the path to life. As his disciples, we share in his responsibility to spread that light to the world.

John the Baptist offers a radical, but stirring, example of how we are called to be the light. John "came for testimony, to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. *He was not the light, but came to testify to the light.*" (7-8) John the Baptist's purification through his encounter with Jesus in the womb and time in the desert allowed the light of Christ to show intensely through him.



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GROW as a disciple of Jesus

As we move toward Christmas, here are two tips for manifesting Jesus' light in the world:

- **Go to confession** to be forgiven, break chains of sin and heal wounds that prevent our cooperation with God's grace.
- **Don't try to create the light.** The light comes from Jesus; it's generated by him and a free gift to those who believe. Like the moon, we don't create light but simply reflect the light from the sun.

The light of Christ is our most precious possession, so don't let Satan blow it out ... let it shine! †