



The Anglican Free Communion
"The Episcopal Free Church"

The Free Protestant Episcopal Church

Primus: Christmas Message

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Many of the religions in the world play-out in their scriptures the themes of light and darkness. Usually as a way to explain both the enlightened nature of deity and a force or forces in opposition. Light and darkness are seen outwardly in nature and within the inner life of individuals. Often we hear the phrase 'seeing the light' or 'treading a dark path'. And then the cover of darkness envelops parts of the world where the sun does not shine. Curiously, in the prologue to St. John's gospel we read that the darkness cannot comprehend the light, or rather it does not understand it. This is a shade different to seeing a conflict between the light and the darkness. It appears as an assumption that darkness is the basic ingredient, and light the intruder. We read in the opening passage of the Book of Genesis that into or upon the darkness light is created. Light and Dark are to God alike as both form the creative process, and the Deity recognises both without equivocation. On Calvary darkness blankets the awful scene of Crucifixion, as if to imply a rampant covering of evil, or within the heart of the passion does the light of the Saviour mysteriously shine forth? In Holman Hunt's famous picture of Jesus at the door, the Master holds a lantern, thus giving meaning to its title as 'The Light of the World'. When we are faced with a crisis or uncertainty and start to feel very

dark and foreboding moments sweeping upon us, we would heed the words in the prologue to the fourth gospel and realise that the darkness cannot comprehend what is happening. The terror is not God's will however painfully devastating it appears to be. In the midst of it all, the true light is still shining. God has not abandoned us. Over the past year our beloved Communion has encountered many dark moments, and bishops and clergy have wrestled to bring light upon many a dark situation. For some it has been a test of loyalty and challenge, either by serious illness or great decision making. As Primus, and the source of unity across the Communion, I express words of gratitude to all our people. To many, where church life is fulfilling and where wonderful fellowship exists, as well as small communities where one or two gather for the Eucharist and prayer, all are helping to build our universal Church, looking to our clergy to pioneer our great tradition since 1897. They keep alive the light of faith and truth and refuse the darkness at great cost. May this joyful season echo for each one of us the words: May your light so shine before people, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in Heaven. Please continue to pray for me. As ever in His, and your, Service.

With my love and blessings,

+ Richard : Primus : England.



+Richard
Archbishop Primus