

June is the month of light – the month of the summer solstice, when millions of people in northernmost Europe stay out late to enjoy the sight of the midnight sun. The sun is something we have been a bit short of recently, but hopefully better days are coming! To have light and glory where there is usually darkness is something we celebrate, we welcome.

In John 9 Jesus said: “I am the light of the world.” He wasn’t comparing Himself to the summer solstice, but preaching at a Jewish occasion which celebrated light every bit as much. It was the Feast of Tabernacles (John 7:14), which was a celebration not only of God’s provision of water, but also of the light of God’s presence with the Israelites in the wilderness.

During the Feast of Tabernacles there was a joyful celebration. The priests would light four huge lamps in the Court of Women. The flames would reach as high as the temple walls and would provide a light that could be seen all throughout Jerusalem. Men of deep piety would dance throughout the night for the entire week of celebrating. A choir, accompanied by an orchestra of instruments, would sing psalms like Psalm 27, which declare “The Lord is my light and my salvation.” It sounds like a lot of fun!

At the height of this grand celebration, the Lord Jesus had the temerity to stand and say that HE was the light that was foreshadowed by the light for the Israelites in the wilderness as they escaped from slavery in Egypt.

The Jewish leaders were furious, and tried to stone Him to death. Jesus did not fight back, He simply illustrated His claim to be the Light of the World by immediately giving sight to a man born blind. (John 9).

In the 20 centuries since then, the Word of God, when it is proclaimed, has drawn people out of the darkness and into the light of Jesus. The Word is, as the psalmist said, “a lamp to my feet and a light for my path” (Psalm 119:105). David said, “In your light we see light” (Psalm 36:9b). Today, by the light of the Word of God, we can see Jesus as He is: truly the Light of the World.

Have you discovered that light in your life? Jesus as the Light of the world, brings light to the darkness of our lives. He can guide us when we are lost. He is with us when we are lonely. He comforts us when we are sad. He reassures us when we are anxious. He brings hope when we despair. That truly is something to celebrate and welcome.

With many blessings

Fr David