**John’s Gospel of Light**

**Today’s Gospel, John 1:1-18, spins out of the ordinary realm and lifts us up to the heavens. It spins us out to star-filled nights and days filled with Light and grace. It spins us to the very beginning of all time when God was setting the corners of the universe. It reminds us Jesus was present from the beginning of time and will be with us to the end of time. It reminds us at the beginning was the word, and the word was with God and the word was God. It tells us in the vastness of all time and space Jesus came to bring Light to our world.**

 **It amazes me when I consider the immensity of Jesus coming into our small little earth bringing what St. John called his fullness. And from his fullness we have received grace upon grace. We have received grace to love one another, grace to care for one another. Grace to extend hospitality to everyone, with no exceptions or caveats; everyone, everyone is welcomed into the fullness of Christ. Yet sometimes the fullness and inclusion of Christ can get lost, can get misconstrued to mean some of us are more acceptable, more loveable than others. I’m not saying it’s easy to accept everyone no matter; in fact it’s very difficult. Yet the fullness of all love, of all Light has asked us to love one another as he loves us.**

**I serve in this truly overwhelming capacity as a priest, and I realize over and over again I can’t stay in the sweetness of the heavens, because I serve here on earth for as long as God chooses to allow me to serve. The struggle to understand how to love everyone is as difficult for me as it is for all of us. I also know throughout time God has always chosen the least among us to be his emissaries; I’m no exception to that rule. But because all of you I’m learning more about what it means to love everyone here on earth. I’m learning it’s easy enough to love those who we find loveable; however we define who is loveable and who is not. I’m learning it’s easy enough to love those who are neutral, who don’t cross our ideas and views. The hard part on a day-to-day basis is to find even a modicum of love for those who don’t like me, and don’t like my views. I’m not going to be maudlin and tell you how easy it is to fully love everybody who irritates me, it isn’t. All I know to do is to keep attempting to extend my circle of love with the help always flowing from the Light of the world. Christ loved all of us from the beginning of time and will love us all to the end of time.**

 **It’s two days after Christmas, and our everyday world can easily crash back on us. For some of us there is too much work, for others there is too little work. Christmas joy can easily fade back into our everyday world. The tree will come down, the manger sets put away in boxes, the gifts quickly put away or returned. Few stories will remain on news programs about good will toward all people. Sometimes the reality of the words written in today’s Gospel can also get packed up and put away. Yet when St. John wrote of Christ, he said. “What has come into being is life, and the life was the Light of all people.”**

 **The Light of all people is the key to the presence of Christ in our lives. Where ever happiness reigns that’s where Christ is, wherever Light touches any of us, that’s where Christ is and will always be. It doesn’t take a whole lot of effort to experience the fullness of Christ. Step outside on a sunny day and look up toward the sun; the very sun we depend on to make our world alive is the symbol of the Christ who is in all life and in all places. All we’re asked to do through our time on earth is to love one another as best we can and to remember the Light has come into the world. The kind of Light that shatters all darkness, the kind of Light that can help us keep Christmas alive and well in our hearts throughout the coming year.**

 **St. John said of the Light of the world, “The Light shines in the darkness and the darkness did not overcome it.” Remember this when the news we see and hear often spews forth fear, and some people tell us to be very afraid. Darkness comes in many forms and may try in many ways to shatter the Light. But darkness can never overcome Light. I’m pleased to know the *Star Wars* saga is returning to many more generations and to those who loved the original movies. *Star Wars* is as ancient as the beginning of time; because it represents the struggle between darkness and Light. The movies show us no matter how fearful darkness can present itself, no matter how often it seems to be winning, the Light will always win. I loved this first new movie in a brand new-look at the *Star Wars* saga. *Star Wars* calls Light the force, and says may the force be with you. I always hear this as may Light be with you, may Christ be with you.**

 **We’re soon going to put away all that reminds us of Christmas. There will be no more Christmas music on the radio, and no more Christmas movies on television to remind us of Christmases past. We will pack away our sad memories as well as all our good memories of all our Christmases. What I pray is none of us will pack away the gift John’s Gospel gives to us. ‘In the beginning was the word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” Jesus was always in the beginning waiting for the right time to bring the knowledge of Light to all people, waiting to let us know of the incredible gift that has been with us since the beginning of time. The word was made flesh and walked among us to let us know, “…the Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it” and never will. Amen**