

Lenten Devotional February 25, 2021

Scripture

John 3:16-21

16 "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. 17 Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. 18 Those who believe in him are not condemned; but those who do not believe are condemned already, because they have not believed in the name of the only Son of God. 19 And this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. 20 For all who do evil hate the light and do not come to the light, so that their deeds may not be exposed. 21 But those who do what is true come to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that their deeds have been done in God."

Devotional

The Rev. Daniel Voigt '11

There is an old story about a wealthy family whose home was going to be the first in their town to have electricity installed. To commemorate the occasion, they invited everyone they could to come out for the initial lighting. People began to cram together in the house that evening expecting to see a miracle. Finally, the moment arrived, and as the sun went down, with great fanfare the light switch was turned on and the lights began to glow. Immediately, everyone gasped in amazement at the sight, but then, just as immediately, their gasps turned to sounds of disgust as the new, bright, electric lights made every spider's web in every corner pop out in astonishing clarity and laid bare every smudge and stain on the walls and floor for all the guests to see.

You can feel the family's embarrassment as the filth of their house was on display. It is a feeling we all know too well when our errors, sins, and grandiose shortcomings become visible. What is most fascinating to me, though, is the predictableness of the next feeling: we wish the light would never have shined at all. But that is when and where the true danger lurks—in beginning to hate the light, when all the light really did was show us where we still needed to clean.

All responses to the light on our darkness start with embarrassment. But the mature response ends in gratitude. After all, God so loved us that, really, the light was sent to bring us life.

Prayer

To the God who loves us, thank you for sending us your light—not to condemn us but to save us. May we have the courage to look at what your light shows us and, ultimately, be thankful for it. Amen.