



Fr. Matt's Musings

June 23, 2018

Light/Darkness

Some of my favorite artists are those associated with the use of light. The Impressionists might be the most popular and famous, but there is another school that plays with light. In English, the school is simply "Light/Darkness". In French, it is called "Clair/Obscur" and George de la Tour is one of its most famous artists. In Italian it is "Chiaroscuro" and Caravaggio is its star. I do not speak Dutch, but perhaps the most famous member of this school is Rembrandt. Its unique feature is that each painting has just one source of light, so the painting is characterized by shadows and darkness.

This weekend, we celebrate the birth of John the Baptist. It is not a coincidence that it occurs just after the summer solstice. That happened earlier this week when we had just over fifteen hours of sunlight. Now, the days start to shorten. John's ministry was to prepare for and point to Jesus. "I must decrease while he must increase."

How do our lives help others see Christ? The Jesuit poet, Gerard Manley Hopkins, wrote: "Christ plays in ten thousand places, in faces and hands not his own." We are those ten thousand faces and hands. Our words and actions need to have the power of the gospel. Another aspect of light is that it is related to clarity. Many of us want clarity, certitude in our lives and decisions. Our spiritual life is a life of faith which does not guarantee clarity but asks for trust in a loving God. When we experience shadows and darkness in our faith life, it is often not a sign of a lack of faith but an invitation to enter into the shadows and darkness, trusting that the God of love is with us and will give us enough light for the next step and each one after that. That only deepens our faith.

Live Jesus!

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