

The Light of the Gospel of Jesus Christ

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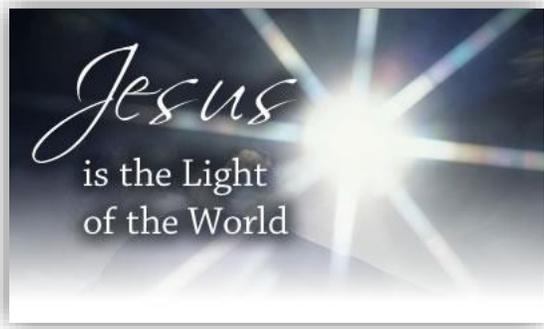
March 1st, 2017 was Ash Wednesday. This marked the beginning of an austere season of reflection known as Lent. My experience of Ash Wednesday was almost destroyed when a colleague told me the following story –

A child attended the Ash Wednesday Liturgy for the first time with his mother. They went forward dutifully with the rest of the congregation for the Imposition of Ashes. The words, "Remember that you are but dust and to dust you shall return..." were intoned by the celebrant, echoing throughout the church, reminding the participants of their mortality. Upon returning to their pew, the child began to quiz his mother about various aspects of the service. Most intriguing was the formula used for the Imposition of Ashes. The child inquired, "What is 'but dust?'" The mother was later found under the pew, beet-red, valiantly attempting to suppress her laughter!

Ever since, I've had to suppress a chuckle when I hear or say the words for the Imposition of Ashes! Perhaps this is why the formula has been changed in the BAS!! We cannot take ourselves too seriously, even in Penitential Seasons!

In a spiritual/religious setting, words are important but often misunderstood. I attended Church from the time I was days old at my baptism at the back of St. James Anglican Church, Pictou, NS one cold winter Sunday afternoon.

However, I did not come to encounter the living Lord Jesus Christ until I was 23 years old – after hearing many words in Church. Few words 'landed' beforehand. While the Traditional Prayer Book affirms "a lively and steadfast faith in Christ our Saviour" as a prerequisite for Holy Communion – see: The Exhortation BCP (1962) Pp. 89. – I had no relationship with Jesus.



Later when the Holy Spirit caused a hunger in my soul to seek the Lord and bless me with the grace of Conversion, I saw for the first time. This experience was reminiscent of a travelling salesman who served the Eastern Shore in the 1950's. He was a committed follower of Jesus and wanted to share his faith.

He was known to ask, "Have you seen the Light?" Often folks would look at him quizzically and he would retort, "You'll know it when you see it!"

It is a profound thing to have walked in darkness and then have the Light of Christ unfold around you, illuminating the

path. Everything changes!

Have you seen the light?

Lent is a time to remember that we walk in darkness, in sin, in hopelessness – except for the mercy of God! The Father gave His Son to transfer us from the power of darkness into the Kingdom of the Son He loves (Colossians 1: 13) – Jesus the Light of the World.

Let us pursue the Light of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and grow into His likeness -

³ Now by this we know that we know Him (Jesus), if we keep His commandments. ⁴ He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. ⁵ But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him. ⁶ He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked." (1 John 2: 3-6)

