



## Wednesday Prayer

### 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Lent – Darkness is beauty

**“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. “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. 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. 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. For all who do evil hate the light and do not come to the light, so that their deeds may not be exposed. 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.” John 3:16-21**

I grew up with Lent being a time of darkness in the church, with the glorious resurrection of Jesus portrayed on Easter Sunday morning with white linens, white banners and streamers, white lilies – it was a lot of white. We celebrate with lightness and condemn darkness as evil. Celebrating Jesus as the light of the world is not in and of itself the problem, but what about all the ways we portray whiteness as holy and darkness as evil?

We can also celebrate darkness. It can be our quiet, holy space to reflect and pray. With young adults in my home, it’s the time that the day begins to come alive. In nature, beautiful owls take flight and frogs sing in chorus at night. Darkness is beauty.

In Lenny Duncan’s book [Dear Church, A love letter from a black preacher to the whitest denomination in the U.S.](#), he shares how our depictions of darkness as evil are harmful to the lives of the marginalized. He shares, “Symbols are important; they shape the way we think about the world, *often without us knowing it.*” As we become open to listening to the stories of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC folks), we learn how our world so often de-values their worth and even their humanity. This plays out tragically in how BIPOC folks are at much greater risk of sexual exploitation and trafficking. And then even within this horrendous crime they are devalued, as shared by this survivor:

*“In my case, being a person of color sold by a white person to other white people was painful on multiple levels. It wasn’t until my adult years that I was able to process how closely this aligned with racial oppression...This is especially true when noting that white peers were sometimes sold for more money simply because of their race. My dark-skinned friends were sold for less.”<sup>1</sup>*

**God of all humanity, open our eyes to see what we have not seen before, open our ears to listen to the stories of our neighbors who suffer from oppression, and open our hearts to work for change. Amen.**

---

Written by Joy McElroy, Cherish All Children Executive Director, and community advocate for racial justice. <sup>1</sup>From blogpost <https://love146.org/lets-talk-about-race-and-human-trafficking/>

[Link to Cherish All Children Lenten Prayers to Prevent Child Sexual Exploitation.](#)