

January 4th – Tuesday – 11th Day of Christmas

Centering Breath Prayer: Child of light...shine on me.

Opening Prayer:

Child of light, sun of righteousness, bathe me in your glory. Illumine me with your wisdom and send me forth in your power and majesty. I would seek understanding as we spend these few moments together on the journey of love today. I praise you and rejoice in your presence. Shed your light on all parts of my day. In the name of Jesus, light of my world, I pray. Amen.

Scripture: Isaiah 60:1-6

Key Verses: Isaiah 60:1: “*Rise up in splendor! Your light has come, the glory of the Lord shines upon you*” (NAB).

On this 11th Day of Christmas, let us “*rise up in splendor,*” not on our own, but, secure in the light of Jesus! Our Christmas celebration is nearly over and we are approaching Epiphany, the festival of light. Without the light that the Christ Child brings, we are in darkness. When we walk in the darkness, we are furtive, tentative and fearful. Things around us are shadowy, unwholesome and unknown, even evil. We grope around, stumble and fall, bump into things and very little is accomplished. Have you ever been deep in a cave when the lights were turned off? I never really understood the phrase, so dark you couldn’t see your hand before your face, until I was on a tour through some caverns and the guide, warning us first, turned all the lights out! The darkness was complete. I could see absolutely nothing, including my hand in front of my face. If left like that, I would have perished, because I could not have found my way anywhere! It gave me a healthy respect for the blind, who have learned how to survive in the darkness. But, darkness does not just affect our vision. Light is essential for life to exist.

The sun is the source of light for our earth. Without the light from the sun, including the non-visual spectrums such as ultraviolet and infrared, life as we know it could not exist. Plants would not grow and photosynthesis could not take place so there would not be oxygen for us to breathe. Without plants there would be no food. Need I say more? Even most of the light we have in the night comes from the sun, reflected off the moon. Malachi pays tribute to the earth’s source of light when he names the coming Messiah the “*sun of righteousness*” (Malachi 4:2). Of course, we know Jesus referred to himself as “*the Light of the World*” in John 8:12. Just as we need light to live, even if we are blind and do not need light to see, we need spiritual light to survive in the spiritual world. “*The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light*” (Isaiah 9:2) begins a wonderful passage of scripture which includes the words, “*For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given*” (Isaiah 9:6a). Jesus is that light. We have walked in spiritual darkness, groping, stumbling, falling and bumping into things, fearful of everything around us. Now, we walk in the light of Christ!

Jesus has been portrayed as the “*sun of righteousness.*” We, like the moon reflects the earth’s sun, can reflect our “*sun of righteousness.*” The glory is not ours, we

only reflect his glory. Christ's light gives us food for our souls and illumination so that we no longer need live in fear, stumbling and groping around in the darkness of our sins. We are not meant to live in the dark. Humanity has learned to create light for illumination at night, and even to grow plants, but it will never replace the sun. Jesus reminds us that lights for illumination should not be hidden away, but placed where they will give the most light. So, we must place our reflected light where it will give the most light. We must not hide that light, but place it where it can lead others to our Lord! *"...let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven"* (Matthew 5:16 NRSV). So, let us *"rise up in splendor!"* Our light truly has come and shines on us in all the glory of the Lord! Before we say goodbye to the Christmas season, let us take up the light we have been given and shine before others in joy. The light has come in the form of a little baby and it burns brighter and brighter as each one of us embraces it and lets it shine forth in our lives. That's what the journey of love brings and it burns brightly in you and me!

Additional Scriptures: Malachi 4:1-2; Isaiah 9:2-7; Matthew 5:14-16

Questions for reflection and/or journaling:

1. How do I see Jesus as my light?
2. How can I reflect the glory of the Lord?
3. Where can I place my light so that it is best seen to reflect God's glory?

Suggestions for action:

1. Phrase for your tree: **RISE UP IN SPLENDOR.**
2. Keep a candle near you today as a reminder to let your light shine. Light it when you can.
3. Ask God to show you where you need to let your light shine most.
4. Let your joy in God's light show in your life today.

Closing Prayer:

Child of light, shine on me so that I may reflect your glory to all those around me today. I rejoice in the light that you bring to my life each day. As we prepare to leave the Christmas season for another year, fill my life with your light and your love, so that those who see me live my life will be drawn to you. Help me to rise up in splendor so that your light is seen by everyone and your glory is evident to all. In the name of Jesus, sun of righteousness and Light of the World, I pray. Amen.