

SEPTEMBER 22 2025 FATHER JOHN BERTAO

For many generations, people around the world used to use various lamps for a variety of purposes. Oil lamps, petrol lamps, and so on, to, of course, light up the room.

I remember when I was born just a few years ago, we had no electricity, so it was a lamp that we used to light up the room and to gather around.

Today, we have, sort of, graduated to wax candles, battery, and, of course, electric lights. And at church, we too use lights and candles. The candles in the sanctuary indicate, especially around the altars we have in our church, they indicate the presence of the Holy Spirit around the altar, three on either side. The altar of sacrifice, the holy Eucharist.

There is also one very important candle that we call the Paschal Candle, as you probably will see right now as an image on your screen. See, this candle, as in parishes around the world, is lit in the most solemn of all vigils, called the Easter Vigil, and this process into the Dark Church representing the light of Christ that has come into the world.

The Paschal Candle is used every day during our Easter season and after that Easter season is put away and only comes out and is only lit during baptisms and funerals. A little more on that in a moment or so.

My dear friends in Christ, in today's gospel, Jesus uses the image of the lamp to speak about light. As I mention, in the Church, we

use the Paschal Candle which is lit at crucial moments in the life of a Christian, in the life of a believer.

Again, and with repeating, the Paschal Candle is the preeminent symbol of the risen Christ. The Paschal Candle is also called the Easter Candle because a new one is lit for the first time at the Easter Vigil, illuminating the procession into the Sanctuary on the Church's holiest night, that is the Easter Vigil. It stands near the ambo and from the place where God's word is proclaimed, while we preach, where it remains throughout the entire Easter season.

Again, during the rest of the year, it is located near the baptismal font, and is used, again, for baptisms and comes out, again, for funerals. Each time it is lit, wax melts, and the candle starts to get shorter. It spends itself, its life, its wax, its light, on these profound moments of the lives-- of the lives that come across the world of baptism and the funeral.

We, who we receive the light of Christ in our baptism, are also called to spend of ourselves, sharing out our light with one another. Professing who we are, followers of Jesus Christ.

Let's just maybe pause for a moment and think. What does the image of light and the lamp tell us about God's kingdom? True that in the ancient world, lamps served a vital function, much like they do today. They enable people to see and work in the dark and avoid stumbling.

The Jews also understood light as an expression of the inner beauty that a person has, truth, and, of course, the goodness of God that we should all have and share. As we hear in the psalm, and I quote, "In his light, we see light." In his light, we see light.

And also, "His word is a lamp to guide our steps." What a beautiful expression.

God's grace not only illuminates the darkness in our lives, it also fills us with spiritual light, joy, and of course, something that is much, much needed, peace and tranquility. Jesus then uses the image of a lamp to describe how his disciples are to live in the light and the truth of Christ and his love.

And, of course, we, we too, also the disciples of Jesus Christ, we are asked, we are called to do the same. To be a light of truth to others, even when it hurts. Even when it is probably a little embarrassing to proclaim Jesus as our Lord and saviour, it is worth it because he will always guard and protect you.

In short, then, we the baptized are living between the candle of our baptism and the candle of our funeral mass. In between, the two candles, in between. Living and rejoicing who we are, followers of Christ.

See, then, our mission is to be light-bearers of Christ, so that others may see the truth of the gospel in us. The good news of Jesus Christ and be freed from the blindness of sin, the ignorance of sin, and the deception of sin, of the evil one.

There is, then, great freedom and joy for those who live in God's light and seek His truth. Those who listen to God and heed His voice will receive more from Him each and every time we proclaim Him as our God and Saviour.

We can also receive much, much from Jesus, such as abundance of wisdom, guidance, peace, and, of course, his blessings. Do you know-- you know the joy and freedom of living in God's light?

Let us pray.

Lord Jesus, you guide me by the light of your saving truth. Fill my heart and mind with your light and truth, and free me from the blindness of sin and capture that I may see your ways clearly and understand your will for my life.

May I, may each one of us, radiate your life, your light, and truth, and more indeed, to those around me.