

## THE LIGHT OF JESUS

“Arise, shine, for your light has come,  
and the glory of the Lord rises upon you.  
See, darkness covers the earth  
and thick darkness is over the peoples,  
but the Lord rises upon you  
and his glory appears over you.”

Isaiah 60:1-2

This holiday season, my thoughts keep wandering far away as they sometimes do. I’ve been thinking about the importance of a smile.

What would we do without the smiles of friends when we meet? And how disappointed we are when we don’t get one—especially from someone we had considered a friend!

It must seem like a trivial thing. But a warm smile means a lot to a person who might be unsure of themselves. Someone who maybe feels they don’t fit in. Such a person might be hurt and feel ignored.

I can remember times when I felt like that, though most of the time I don’t anymore. I do remember that the pain I felt after coming home from church was sometimes great. Simply because I had not received a warm smile. I had not received an indication that I mattered.

I know. They were probably just busy or distracted for some reason. And yet . . . my sensitivity kept me from realizing that.

When I receive a smile it’s like being washed by God’s rays of light. Not receiving the smile leaves me feeling like there’s something wrong with me and that there’s something wrong with my relationship with the person.

I believe that giving a person a smile is like shining God’s warm light on those who might really need it. We could be the messengers of his light. And who’s in need? I think everyone is.

What a wondrous thing a sincere smile can be to a person who receives it. A smile helps us connect, if even for a moment. It elevates our heart and encourages us. They would know that I’m happy to see them. They would know that I care about them. They would know that God values them and that I want to be a sister to them—a sister in Christ.

I pray that I will remember to smile at the people around me, especially at church—the place where people come to experience God’s love.

marja