



## **It is better to light a candle than to curse the darkness**

The most moving part of the Easter ceremonies for me is when the priest carries the Paschal Candle into the darkened church during the Easter Vigil. A darkened church where everyone is a little nervous and most of us careful of our movements, is suddenly transformed into a bright, confident and joyful place, as slowly the light of Christ is spread out among the people.

It reminds me of the *Christopher Movement*. It was founded by a Maryknoll missionary priest who gave it the motto, "It is better to light a candle than to curse the darkness." He explained how he had received the original inspiration. One sunny day he entered a large theatre in New York. By contrast the interior was extremely dark and the priest was frightened to move. It was then that he heard movement at the back of the stage. He called out and a stagehand shone a small torch out into the hall. It was incapable of lighting up the theatre but according to the priest it changed everything for him. He had something to head towards, a goal that gave him confidence.

I have always thought this was a great motto for missionaries. We may not be able to dispel all the darkness in the world but we can light a small candle and maybe it will give hope to someone else and provide them with a purpose or goal. Equally, it's no use cursing the darkness. That only intensifies the darkness and our feelings of helplessness.

Our world is at times dark. There is much fear, injustice and dishonesty. I believe that our Christian vocation is never to add to the darkness. We try to be as truthful, just and merciful as we can. We also try to light small candles that may not dispel all the darkness but may make the world a radically different and more hopeful place.

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