

When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life" John 8:12.

I have read John 8:12 many times.

And, every time, I have always been comforted by Jesus' truth:

"I am the Light of the World."

I could meditate on this truth all day.

But, when I read the verse this time, my attention was strangely drawn to the word '*darkness*.'

I've never really acknowledged the word *darkness* in this verse before.

After all, it's a verse about *light*.

But like metal filings to a magnet . . . my eyes were drawn and fixed to the word *darkness*.

So, I sat back, in silence, and meditated for a while on the word *darkness*.

And it didn't take long before images of the past year stirred.

And I pondered the question: where is God in a Coronavirus world?

Never before have we experienced the lockdown of cities
and even countries.

The closing of borders,
the banning of travel (which I love).

The shutting of all but essential services.

Silent towns, silent cities,
bereavement, loneliness . . .

the images of *darkness* went on.

It's a shaky and uncertain climate.

And here we are, in our roles,

Facing that *darkness* head on.

Supporting our school communities as best we can,
while facing our own personal challenges.

As I reflected on the word *darkness*,

I recognised how my school,

like yours,

has in some way helped others to face the *darkness*.

And that brought me a feeling of peace.

As I drive to school each morning . . . in the dark . . .

I take a moment to stop in a layby

on a quiet country lane.

In the distance, on the horizon, the sun starts to rise:

a ribbon of colour splitting the *darkness*.

Sometimes – if time allows - I will wait and watch the sun rise.

On some days, it's a brilliant, blinding sun.

It's a beautiful moment.

Gradually the dark sky around me disappears

and I hear Jesus' truth again:

"I am the light of the World, whoever follows me will never walk in darkness."

My school is near to the River Dee,

and we have had the most amazing skies over the river this year.

On several occasions, a member of staff has commented,

"Have you seen the sky?"

And we've all looked up with expressions of "Ooh!" and "Aah!".

The colours have ranged from deep orange to pinks and mauves, turquoise and purples.

They have been indescribable,

and none of my descriptions give justice to the reality.

And it brings a wonderful sense of peace and joy.

In John 8:12, I see Jesus doing precisely that . . .

drawing our gaze away from the *darkness* and towards a beautiful *light* . . .

'the light of life' found in Jesus.

As I read this verse, Jesus wanted me to consider the *darkness*.

Because, by thinking about *darkness*, I would see and feel the *light* more strongly.

And I felt peaceful.

I hope you find peace in the verse, too.

When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life" John 8:12.

Amen.