

Dear Friends of St. Lawrence,

Between the years of 1992-95, I lived in Monterrey, Mexico. I'm not sure of how many of you know about that city, but it's actually the second to largest city in Mexico, which sits some 2.5 hours south of the Laredo, Texas border. It's a very industrial town, but it's beautiful nonetheless. I lived there because my father was a Special Agent with Diplomatic Security at the State Department and he (we) were assigned there to overlook the physical security of the U.S. Consulate, in addition to other U.S. government-related interests. I spent my high school years there; years I'll never forget. In fact I spend a week there each summer to reconnect with friends, etc.

At any rate, we lived just a tad outside of the city in a suburban area called San Pedro, which is situated in the majestic mountains of the Sierra Madre. Many a night, I'd have sleepovers with my friends and we'd actually all sleep on this enormous trampoline, where we would enjoy a spectacular view of the stars. It was as though those millions upon millions of stars were staring us directly in the face and the beauty of it all was something to behold. For those of you who have lived or traveled well beyond the city limits of New York, you probably have a good idea of what I'm trying to describe. Star-gazing was something I absolutely delighted in. I remember one night having a conversation about those stars with one of my very best buddies. I'd shared with him that although there were so many stars out there, it seemed as though the darkness of space occupied the majority of those glimmers of light. Bear in mind, it was one of those "philosophical" conversations teenagers typically have about the meaning of life and the universe, and so on and on so forth. It was a conversation that revolved around darkness and light and its application to good and evil. I remember that conversation as though it happened yesterday. Anyways, I made the comment that the darkness in the night skies represented the darkness here on earth and why there was so much poverty, sickness, violence, murder, greed, corruption and on, and on. My friend's name was Cody and he was a God-fearing Mormon. I must admit that his adherence to religion was much more sophisticated and enlightened than mine because as a teen, I really did not take my Catholic Faith all too seriously (to say the least). I'd just go through the motions at Mass, and that was about it. Anyhow, he said something to the effect of "what if there was ONLY darkness? Eric, notice all the light of the stars!"

My takeaway from this was that yes, while there is a tremendous deal of darkness in our world, there are *also* so, so many lights of hope and goodness and love at the same time. And we see it today - our healthcare professionals putting their lives on the line for perfect strangers who are afflicted with a highly contagious and deadly virus. I see it today in the MANY generous responses (both financial, and otherwise) I have received from all of you - my beloved friends and parishioners of St. Lawrence! Yes, we have war and famine, terrorism, unspeakable domestic abuse, and illness and an entire plethora of evils that plague our world - no question about it! But the existence of light is very evident as well! I can personally testify to this fact given the outpouring of genuine charity, love and support I witness on a daily basis here in Weehawken, as well as what I see in the news on TV. It's awesome and it warms my heart!

Once this pandemic passes, our world will NEVER be the same, but as a believer in the power of Christ's victory over sin and death, I also think, that much like the beautiful flowers of Springtime, goodness will blossom and peace and prosperity will bloom in ways we never before thought possible! As for the darkness in the night skies ... well, heck, if you as me, the LIGHT will overcome the darkness in our world and it will reflect the Light of Christ Jesus' miraculous Resurrection living in our hearts and in our souls! While darkness will always be around us, the LIGHT will win! This is the message of Easter, and I applaud all of you for being a proverbial light to me, personally, as well as to each and every precious human being you encounter in life!

God bless you and HAPPY EASTER!!!

Love,

Fr. Eric