

10<sup>th</sup> May 2026 – Matins

**Zechariah 8:1–13; Revelation 21:22–22:5**

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*Shine, Jesus, shine* ✨ *Fill this land with the Father’s glory* ✨ *Blaze, Spirit, blaze* ✨ *Set our hearts on fire* ✨ *Flow, river, flow* ✨ *Flood the nations with grace and mercy* ✨ *Send forth your word* ✨ *Lord, and let there be light*

Today we are drawn into one of the most radiant and hope-filled visions in all of Sacred Scripture: the closing chapters of the Revelation to St John the Divine, in which he beholds the fullness of God’s glory in the new heaven and the new earth. Here, we are given a glimpse not merely of the end of time, but of the ultimate purpose of all creation—the complete union of God with His people, the triumph of divine light over every darkness.

John tells us something striking: *“I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.”* For generations, the temple had been the sacred meeting place between God and His people. It was where sacrifices were offered, where prayers ascended, where the divine presence dwelt in a special way. And yet, in this heavenly vision, the temple is no longer needed. Why? Because there is no longer any separation. God is not encountered in a specific place—He is everywhere, fully present, fully accessible. The Lamb, Jesus Christ, is Himself the temple. This is the fulfilment of everything we experience in seed form here on earth. Every Eucharist, every Matins, every moment of prayer is a foretaste of that perfect communion. When we gather, we are not just remembering Christ—we are stepping into His presence. But in the heavenly Jerusalem, that presence will no longer be veiled. It will be direct, immediate, overwhelming in its beauty.

And then comes the image of light. *“The city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God is its light, and its lamp is the Lamb.”* Think about that. All the lights we depend on—the sun that governs our days, the moon that softens the night—are rendered unnecessary. God Himself becomes the light. This brings to mind (somewhat surprisingly) the well-known worship song, *“Shine, Jesus, Shine.”* (I did consider asking for it as one of the hymns today, but somehow it doesn’t go very well with Byrd and Britten, nice though they are...) ANYWAY - In that song, we pray, *“Shine, Jesus, shine, fill this land with the Father’s glory.”* What we sing as a prayer now becomes, in Revelation, an eternal reality. The light of Christ will not just touch the world—it will completely transform it. There will be no shadows left, no hidden corners, no fear of darkness.

But let us be honest: we are not yet in that city. We still live in a world where darkness persists—where sin, suffering, and confusion cloud our vision. That is why the call of this Scripture is not only to hope, but also to mission. If Christ is the light of the world, then we, as His disciples, are called to reflect that light. The song continues, *“Lord, the light of Your love is shining, in the midst of the darkness shining.”* Notice that—it does not say the darkness has already disappeared. It says the light shines in the midst of it. This is our vocation. We are not called to wait passively for heaven; we are called to bring the light of Christ into the darkness here and now.

How do we do this? First, by remaining close to Christ, the Lamb who is our lamp. Light is not something we generate on our own. We do not create holiness by our own strength. We receive it. Just as the moon reflects the sun, we reflect Christ. Through prayer, through the sacraments, through the Word of God, we are filled with His light.

Second, we shine by our witness. In a world often marked by division, we are called to unity. In a culture that can be harsh and unforgiving, we are called to mercy. In places where despair takes root, we are called to hope. Every act of charity, every word of truth spoken in love, every moment of forgiveness—these are rays of Christ’s light breaking into the world. Revelation also tells us that *“the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it.”* This is a vision of universality. The light of Christ is not for a select few; it is for all people. The Church, as Catholic—universal—is meant to be a sign of this. We are called to draw all nations into the light, not by force, but by the radiant witness of lives transformed by grace.

Then we hear something deeply consoling: *“And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination”* At first, this might sound like a warning—and it is—but it is also a promise. It means that all the brokenness we carry, all the wounds of sin and suffering, will not have the final word. God is preparing a place where everything is made new, where purity and peace reign completely. And at the heart of this vision is the river of life, *“clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.”*

On either side stands the tree of life, bearing fruit each month, and *“the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.”* This is Eden restored and surpassed. What was lost through sin is not only recovered—it is glorified. Healing. That word speaks to something deep within each of us. We all carry wounds—some visible, many hidden. The promise of Revelation is that God’s grace is not only about forgiveness; it is about restoration. The light of Christ does not merely expose—it heals.

Finally, we hear the most intimate promise of all: *“They shall see His face, and His name will be on their foreheads.”* To see the face of God—this is the ultimate desire of the human heart, whether we realise it or not. Every longing for beauty, for truth, for love finds its fulfillment there. And *“night will be no more.”* No more fear. No more uncertainty. No more death. *“They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.”*

Brothers and sisters, this is our destiny. This is what we are made for.

So let us return to the prayer of that song: *“Shine, Jesus, shine.”* But let us not hear it lightly. Let us mean it. Let us invite Christ to shine into every corner of our lives—into our hearts, our families, our struggles, our decisions. And then let us go forth and shine—not with our own light, but with His. So that one day, by His grace, we may enter that holy city, where the Lamb is the light, where the river of life flows, and where we will dwell in the presence of God forever.

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*In Nomine +*