

No one ever believes me when I say I'm painfully shy and that I'm introverted- "*Oh come on, they say, you look like you're the most confident man when you're up there in the pulpit preaching or just talking to the people*", but they don't know that my heart is beating a mile a minute and my legs are shaking and I want nothing more than to dig a hole and climb into it and pull the cover over me.

Not that I don't love you all- I do with all my heart- but the fact that God chose a painfully shy, very anxious and very nervous and extremely introverted man to be a priest, let alone a pastor, shows that God has a weird sense of humor.

Introverts, of course, are those who are generally quiet, reflective people who often need to be alone and who orient their energy to their inner world; extraverts being those who get energy from being with other people all the time and who orient their energy to the outer world. None of us is either totally introverted or totally extraverted, but we do generally fall into one camp or the other. That being said, every time I take the Myers-Briggs personality test, my introversion score is so high it's practically off the charts.

Introverts often don't feel appreciated for who they are by nature and that's just because they're not like everybody else. The burden on us introverts then is to feel that there's nothing to be ashamed of in being introverted, even if people want to try all the time to "cure" us, and to remember that we can contribute as much to our society as our more extroverted sisters and brothers, *just by being who we are*.

I know firsthand what it means to be thought of as having something wrong with me- as if wanting to be alone a good part of the time and to think before I speak makes me less of a person than someone who craves social interaction all the time and who thinks out loud all the

time. And so I've always tended to compare myself (unfavorably) to people who are more outgoing and who seem to have a much easier time of making their way through the world- I wish I could be like her or like him- they always know the right thing to say and they always fit right in and they have so much more to offer the world than I do. Well, I've come to realize that ain't true.

*"You are the light of the world...(and) your light must shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father."*

When we were baptized, that is when we were incorporated into the Body of Christ, we didn't just receive the light of Christ when our godparents lit their candle from the Paschal Candle- we actually became the light of Christ- we became the light of the world- and if this is news to you, I'm not surprised. And that's because we've gotten used to thinking that Christ is somehow separate from us- that Christ is essentially totally other than who we are and if He does come to us it's only because either he pities us or he wants to redeem us from our worthlessness and our degradation.

*Nonsense-* I could use a much stronger word, believe me, but I won't. Yes, Jesus Christ is the uniquely perfect image of the Father who communicates God to us but the idea of Christ doesn't end there- far from it. We are the Body of Christ, the community of believers who share in the very life of Christ; we are the Church, the family of believers who are the continuation of the Incarnation in the world; we are sons and daughters of God, beloved children of God who will one day share fully in the glory of God and who now show forth that glory when we live in the world as Jesus did; we are the light of Christ that has come to reveal God's salvation to the nations, that is, to people who are fed up with the way things are and yet who hold on to the hope

that the Kingdom of God will come to its fullness and that God will one day make the world as he wants it to be.

“*One day*” does not necessarily mean sometime in the future, far, far away, a day when all of us will be long gone and so who really cares anyway? Instead, look at *one day* as that quiet yet persistent movement of the universe toward the goal on which God set it from the very beginning- the goal of all things as being brought back to God and therefore being brought to the fulfillment of their goodness and their holiness.

And that happens all the time- every time we see how precious we are in the eyes of God and not how awful we think we are; every time we share who we are and what we have with the people around us for no other reason than the gifts we have been given were meant to be shared; every time we allow ourselves to be loved by God and every time we allow that love to be expressed and made present in our love for one another.

We each have something very unique to offer the world we live in- we each enlighten the world in a uniquely different way. There’s no point in comparing ourselves with someone else because each one of us has their own unique way of being in the world and whoever you are and whatever kind of person you are, you can shine the light of who you are, and the world is better for it when you do.