



My Dear Brothers and Sisters,

In today's Gospel, we hear Jesus cry out, **"I give praise to you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for although you have hidden these things from the wise and the learned you have revealed them to little ones"** (Matthew 11:25). Jesus reveals His greatest mysteries to the little ones! This holds a special place in my heart, especially this week as we have Vacation Bible School (VBS).

Every year, it is such a delight to work with the kids at VBS... though it is exhausting, and sometimes (most days) I'm covered in sweat from singing and dancing in the heat! So many of the children come to VBS and encounter the love and mercy of God. God reveals His love to the little ones!

This year, our theme is "Stellar," which is an outer space theme, but focused on Jesus' light in the darkness. Isn't this what we all need? We'll start off the week remembering that "When life feels dark, shine Jesus' light!" Through the week, we'll learn how in good times and in bad we're to "Shine Jesus' Light!" This might seem very basic and obvious, but I've learned over the years that what we teach at VBS to the kids, I need to learn and appropriate myself. Sometimes when things are difficult for me or others, I forget how I need to shine Jesus' light to others. It is so easy to turn in on myself and forget that we are called to be witnesses at all times... and that His light is always there shining on *us*, even in the midst of the darkness. The kids will get this by the end of the week, but the big question is: Will I?

I'm reminded of something interesting someone showed me. If you take a remote control and look at the IR LED (the little thing on the front end that sends out the signal), you'll notice, as you press the buttons, that you can't see anything. The infrared light is outside our visible spectrum. But, if you take a digital camera (for instance, on your phone), and look at the IR LED through the camera, you will see a blinking light. Even though we can't see it, the light is shining, and if we have eyes to see (a cell phone), we can recognize this light.

And Jesus' light is there, shining all around us, if only we have eyes to see! In the meantime, we are invited to trust His light is there, even when it's dark and lonely. In those times when we're hurting, alone, or sad, we can still reach out in faith, trusting He is present and shine His light on those around us.

I ask that you pray for our children at VBS this week – as well as all the teen and adult volunteers – that we may all learn to trust Jesus' light is always surrounding us, and shine His light to others!