

## Shadow Savior

The solace of the summer sun is serenading you, as the sun begins to set on another school year. You can almost see the summer sun, feel its warmth, hear the surf washing across the shore, taste the refreshing libation of barley and hops, and picture the spectacular sunset as you dream of summer vacation.

Yet, your summer dream is darkened by shadows – the reality that final grades will soon be due. In this darkness, you now foresee only frustrated parents and frenzied students. The truth is that as you anticipate the solace of the summer sun, the shadows of the school year only seem to spread.

As a child, shadows were scary. As an educator, shadows can be downright deadly. Allow me to explain. As a child, many, if not most of you, were frightened by the unknown things that might lurk in the shadows. As an educator, we all know, even if we're hesitant to admit it, what lurks in the shadows is... nothing but the dark shadows of doubt and guilt.

Shrouded by these shadows, despair develops: "Did I do my absolute best this year?" "Could I have done better?" "If only I had..." "I probably could have..." "I probably should have..." You fill in the blanks.

Guilt is a dark shadow in which the insidious Satan lurks, always accusing, always condemning. From the dark recesses of the shadow, a whisper soon crescendos into a shout, "You're not good enough!" "You've failed!" "You're guilty!" The shadow-stalker's hellish accusations burn because they're true. I am guilty. I have failed.

Only True Light can dispel the darkness of doubt and absolve the deadly darkness of guilt. *"This is the message we have heard from Him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say we have fellowship with Him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the Truth. But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the Truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His Word is not in us"* (1 John 1:5-10).

Beyond any shadow of a doubt, True Light dispels and displaces the darkest of shadows. That's Good News for you, for me, for all engulfed by the dark shadows of doubt, failure, and guilt. Jesus came to dispel your dark shadows. He is your Shadow Savior!

The Shadow Savior took all your shadows of doubt, failure, and guilt upon Himself on the cross. There He was darkened unto death for you. The Shadow Savior proclaims to you, this very day, *"There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death"* (Romans 8:1-2).

Grace is a marvelous light in which the merciful Savior abides, always absolving, always defending. From the brilliant nucleus of the light, a whisper soon crescendos into a shout, "Jesus is good enough!" "Jesus conquered!" "Jesus has pardoned!" The Shadow Savior's heavenly declarations console because they're true. I'm not guilty. I'm free.

The darkness of our shadows was forever dealt with on Good Friday, and the Light of Easter has dawned. We are an Easter people. We live and have our being in the Easter Light that overcame the utter darkness of Good Friday. *"In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it"* (John 1:4-5).

The solace of the Son is serenading you, as the sun begins to set on another school year. You can see the Son, feel the warmth of His forgiveness, hear His Words of baptismal grace washing across the shores of your soul, taste the refreshing liberation of His body and blood, and believe that the spectacular Son set you free to live on permanent vacation from the shadows of doubt, failure, and guilt.

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