

Office for unity

Thursday, November 07, 2023

Jews celebrate Hanukkah this Thursday 7 December 2023

The 'Hanukkah feast is a Jewish festival of rabbinic institution, commemorating the re-inauguration of the altar of offerings in the Second Temple of Jerusalem, when it returned to Judaic worship after three years of interruption and closure by King Antiochos IV in the 2nd century BC.

The Hanukkah lights are sacred. We have no right to use them in any other way, only to look at them. In this way, we affirm the supremacy of divine light over our limited humanity.

Life's endeavor is to channel the light of day so that it illuminates the night: we strive to cultivate all that is good and divine, and to direct these positive resources to overcoming and transforming the negative aspects of the 'dark side' of creation. This process was symbolized by the lighting of the Temple's Menorah: lit before the end of the day and placed in the Sanctuary, the Menorah radiated its divine radiance beyond the Temple walls to the dark world outside. Sometimes darkness invades the Temple like a black tide engulfing a lighthouse, extinguishing the Menorah and staining its holy oil. Circumstances when we can no longer draw on the day to light up the night.

At times like these, we have to look for the "little vial of pure oil" where it is hidden, the essence of creation that is untouched and unalterable. We must go beyond the apparent dimensions of "day" and "night" in order to reveal the original particularity of light and darkness.