

# ENCOURAGEMENT ENCOURAGEMENT

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## Recognising Truth...

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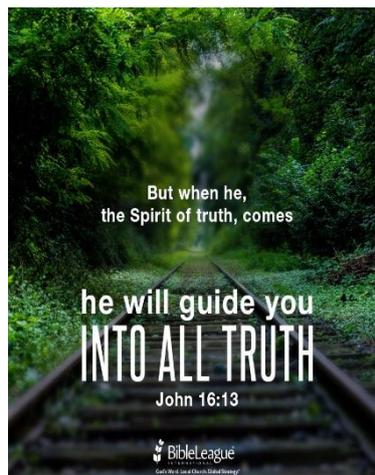
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Jesus said “If you stand by my teaching, you are truly my disciples; you will know the truth and the truth will set you free”. (John 8: 31-32.) Many of us put quite a big store on truthfulness. We live in an era, a time in History in which seeking the truth has become almost outdated. While earnest men and women still try to reflect on it, whether it be in the sciences or philosophy, religion or day-to-day activities many today prefer to take the view that it is always subjective or worse, that there is no such thing. Indeed, Pilate’s comments to Jesus almost echo what is now a prevalent view ‘what is truth?’

If you have ever tried to find out what really happened in any situation you will realise how complicated it can become. You can often be caught up with something resembling opinions and attitudes, disguises, and interpretations rather than straightforward statements. This is often seen in court situations. Even more difficult is the finding of facts relative to events such as conflicts and wars. In recent times this has been even more complex when people put forward ideas in order to change or sway opinion or simply to mislead others.

It has become very difficult to tease out the truth and while we hopefully could recognise what is now termed ‘Fake News’ it becomes more difficult when it plays to our deepest fears and anxieties. Thus, we start to *believe* what reflects our attitudes and thought and not the essence of what is happening. This is a great problem when decisions are made based on peoples’ thoughts, rather than fact.

There is no doubt that people often see what they want to see and hear what they want, or hope to hear. We just have to look at the description of any event even if all are telling the truth to realise that our ‘seeing’ is often faulty. But that does not *negate the actual action or event*, but this may be hard to get to.



The event happens despite those who observe it... In a road accident, an event happens, but how we see it depends on what part we played in it, the relationship to those involved, whether someone is injured, even the weather.

But why is seeking the truth so important? Another aspect of this can be seen in the ‘opposite’ which is the deliberate and intentional falsehood or telling lies. In our everyday lives it is so easy to cover up mistakes by simply omitting part of the story, or changing it, or downplaying something, mostly done to cover our own errors or because of fear. These, if

we are truthful seem to us as minor things, of no importance. Indeed, they can be justified in our minds as softening the blow or not hurting someone’s feelings. Yet they often have consequences which we could not have predicted and can be worse than actually telling the truth. At best a respectful silence can often be more effective.

How much more important and crucial then, are those lies that can affect a whole person’s life and produce effects such as rejection, false witness, calumny, and detraction. Sometimes truth can be disguised in silence where speaking the truth would have had a better effect. Even more serious still are those falsehoods which can lead to War, Conflict, Prejudice and Rejection.

Why then does Jesus speak of Truth setting us free? He tells us that if we follow His teaching, becoming his disciples, we will learn the truth. He taught the Apostles and Disciples step by step and allowed them to grow in that truth. He did not impose it but neither did He hide it. He often went deeply behind peoples’ thoughts and feelings and made them think hard about what they said and thought, and challenging them. When we don’t want to hear

Every truth without exception is from the Holy Spirit.

St. Thomas Aquinas

something that is truthful, we simply evade it or think it does not affect us. Getting to realise that in fact we are hiding from it is often a painful journey and full of reassessments and struggles.

But Jesus knew that in honest people the layers can be stripped inch by inch revealing our real motives and desires. Peter's reluctance to accept that he would deny Jesus was put to an acute test and unveiled to him who he really was, a fearful man, but he learnt from this and faced this truth making him a strong leader.

And so it is for us... When we cannot find the truth about something we should not just give up. Jesus himself said "seek and you will find"... it is so important when decisions are to be made that affect others and that we do not use our own thoughts and ideas without testing them thoroughly. How we do this... First we must challenge ourselves, and seek opposite viewpoints. We must try to learn more about what our decisions entail or what others have done. This is often reflected in those who we respect and in the lives of saints and faith filled people.

We must be patient and allow things to be revealed to us bit by bit. If in doubt we must not be hasty.. We must try to inform ourselves better and try to understand where our thoughts come from. Most importantly we must pray for light and wisdom. If we constantly reject the teaching of Jesus we are in danger of rejecting the Holy Spirit, a sin that cannot be forgiven... (Matthew 12: 30-32)



We have been gifted with these gifts of the Holy Spirit which will enable us to discern the truth... This month we celebrate Pentecost, so important in the search for truth. Those 'seven-fold' gifts have helped us to be able to seek and find the truth with courage and understanding.

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We are more likely to find the truth when we allow what we believe to be tested. Have we the courage to try even if it upsets our thoughts and ideas? Jesus said that He is 'The Way, the Truth, and the Life'... following Him is where truthfulness begins... There can be no other way... Halina Holman©

### Pope Francis

May the Lord Jesus, the pure Word that springs from the heart of the Father, help us to make our communication free, clean and cordial; may the Lord Jesus, the Word that became flesh, help us to listen to the beating of hearts, to rediscover ourselves as brothers and sisters, and to disarm the hostility that divides us; may the Lord Jesus, the Word of truth and love, help us to speak the truth in charity, so that we may feel we are each other's guardians".

Rome January 2023

### Prayer thought

'It is obvious that to be earnest in seeking the truth is an indispensable requisite for finding it'.

St. John Henry Newman

*N. B. Don't forget the Novena in preparation for the Feast of Pentecost. It starts on Ascension Day and ends on the Feast. Pray for the Gifts of the Holy Spirit. Most Prayer books have an appropriate Novena. Or find it on-line.*

### Feast Days in May

1<sup>st</sup> St. Joseph the Worker

2<sup>nd</sup> St. Athanasius

3<sup>rd</sup> Ss. Philip & James, Apostles

4<sup>th</sup> The English Martyrs

5<sup>th</sup> Sixth Sunday of Easter

9<sup>th</sup> The Ascension of the Lord (Holy Day of Obligation)

10<sup>th</sup> St. John of Avila

12<sup>th</sup> Seventh Sunday of Easter

13<sup>th</sup> Our Lady of Fatima

14<sup>th</sup> St. Matthias, Apostle

19<sup>th</sup> Pentecost Sunday

20<sup>th</sup> Mary, Mother of the Church

21<sup>st</sup> St. Godric of Finchale

22<sup>nd</sup> St. Rita of Cascia

23<sup>rd</sup> Our Lord Jesus Christ, Eternal High Priest

25<sup>th</sup> St. Bede the Venerable

26<sup>th</sup> Sunday of The Most Holy Trinity

27<sup>th</sup> St. Augustine of Canterbury

31<sup>st</sup> The Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary