



SUNDAY 12 MAY 2024

DIOCESE OF Hexham & Newcastle

The Parishes of: Bishop Auckland || Newton Aycliffe & Shildon || Willington
Crook, Tow Law & Wolsingham || Tudhoe || Coundon, Ferryhill & Windlestone

ESCOMB PARTNERSHIP NOTE

7th Sunday of Easter (B) : John 17: 11-19

The Russian leader Lenin once said that a lie told often enough becomes the truth.

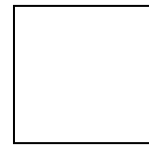
In such cases, expediency becomes the only standard, perhaps sometimes qualified by what you could get away with. Truth then becomes a fluid commodity, bearing little relationship to anything but the speaker's own convenience. Sadly this can be infectious and corrodes the standards of integrity upon which so much of life depends - just check out world politics. Seems that gullibility flourishes.

In the Good News today, Jesus is praying to the Father for you and me, his followers. In fact he's doing that now all the time (Hebrews 7:25 'he lives forever to intercede for us') and he's asking our Father to keep us true to everything our fathering and mothering God is about. Being true involves an open and honest commitment, to a God, incidentally, whose love of the poor, the sick and the downtrodden should challenge the style of how and who we serve.

Jesus has no illusions about us. We need help. Our heads can be turned very easily away from what's best. He talks with tenderness about us, seeking the Father's protection for us because he himself is not going to be around to do it as he once was for the small band of apostles. His teaching led them - and leads us - out of worldly values and self absorption into the joyful dance of love that is the mystery of the Trinity.

Our God shares his life with us! Our apprenticeship requires that we study God's word constantly and consistently. Jesus has passed the Father's word on to us. Just stop and take that in. Please. Without a grasp of the message, we're likely to regress into the drumbeat of other voices, foreign to the truth revealed to us by God. The Lord prays we'll be consecrated in the truth - that is, soaked, immersed, identified with and overtaken by the truth that God is total love and the message of his care for all life has been entrusted to us to express by every means we can. That's our job.

Jesus has ascended to heaven. Next week we'll remind ourselves over again that the Spirit of the Father and the Son is given to us, replacing Jesus' physical accompaniment. The Holy Spirit is given to us to 'renew the face of the earth'. We're the agents to make that happen. We are to interpret what that means personally and to work out how we do it - now, today, tomorrow and onwards. In truth, it's a humbling and awesome responsibility shared from a God who loves and trusts us. We're never on our own - and that's the truth.



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Pope Francis on Truth

Under the guise of tolerance, relativism ultimately leaves the interpretation of moral values to those in power, to be defined as they see fit. In the absence of objective truths or sound principles other than the satisfaction of our own desires and immediate needs, we should not think that political efforts or the force of law will be sufficient. When the culture itself is corrupt, and objective truth and universally valid principles are no longer upheld, then laws can only be seen as arbitrary impositions or obstacles to be avoided.

We need to learn how to unmask the various ways that the truth is manipulated, distorted and concealed in public and private discourse. What we call 'truth' is not only the reporting of facts and events, such as we find in the daily papers. It is primarily the search for the solid foundations sustaining our decisions and our laws. This calls for acknowledging that the human mind is capable of transcending immediate concerns and grasping certain truths that are unchanging, as true now as in the past. As it peers into human nature, reason discovers universal values derived from that same nature.

- *Fratelli Tutti paras 206 and 208*