

PALM SUNDAY – 2022

Isaiah 50:4-7

Philippians 2:6-11

Lk 23:1-49

It was the Greek dramatist Aeschylus (525-456 BC) who said that “In war, truth is the first casualty.” Culture wars are raging in Western society in which truth is cancelled and fantasy is fiercely protected. The battle is between good and evil and is being fought in order to defend the belief that truth is not fluid. Absolute truth exists irrespective of what individual truths are adopted on any given day.

The war against evil was won on a cross just outside Jerusalem on Good Friday. Jesus’ sacrifice sealed evil’s fate, but his faithful followers are struggling to win the peace.

In St Luke’s account of the Passion and death of Jesus there are numerous examples of the fluidity of the truth. Jesus was first tried in the court of the Jewish Sanhedrin where bribed false witnesses were lined up against him. Pontius Pilate was told that Jesus had not only encouraged the evasion of Roman taxes, he also claimed to be a king. Pilate was more interested in avoiding the truth than discovering it so he sent Jesus to Herod, whom he disliked, in order to shift responsibility sideways. Herod was known to be very flexible with the truth, for he was renowned for generating his own truth. As long as Jesus amused him Herod was happy.

Truth was irrelevant to the Roman and Jewish soldiers. They were paid to obey orders, not question their morality. Crowds are renowned for generating their own narrative which is more important to them than the truth. The women of Jerusalem wept for Jesus, but their compassion blinded them to the truth that while the judgement of the worldly authorities was falling on Jesus, as Hosea had prophesied (Hos 10:8) God’s judgement would fall on Jerusalem and those who rebelled against God.

The crowds at the foot of the cross were mockers urging Jesus to float down from the cross as Satan had tempted him to float down from the Temple parapet during his temptations in the wilderness. Their truth numbed them from seeing the truth that it was Jesus’ obedient love for his Father, not the nails, that kept him on the cross reconciling the world to God. It was when the Roman centurion declared Jesus to be an innocent man that the crowds recognised the truth and went home beating their breasts. Too little, too late.

Jesus had said, “The Truth shall set you free” (Jn 8:32). Yet Pilate asked, “What is Truth?” Is truth fluid or absolute? Jesus did not say that the Truth would bring us political freedom, but spiritual freedom, the freedom from not being controlled by the evil of chaos emanating from self-focus. God’s Truth comes to be known by believing in Jesus, his agent. Involvement with Jesus is the Way to God.

It is not knowledge *of* Jesus that brings us freedom. It is knowing him in our hearts and recognising his Truth by living it in our lives.

This week we will accompany Jesus to the Cross. In the midst of the flood of fluid truths about Jesus, the Church and believers in general, that are swirling around in Western culture, ask yourselves:-

- 1 What is the truth of the one who rode into Jerusalem on a donkey on Palm Sunday?
- 2 What is the truth of the one who cleansed the Temple and decried empty religious practice that keeps the rules but doesn't change lives?
- 3 What is the truth of the one who taught the people in the Temple about God's judgement?
- 4 What is the truth of the one who broke bread and offered wine during a supper saying, "Do this in remembrance of me?"
- 5 What is the truth of the one crucified on Good Friday?
- 6 What is the truth of the one who was resurrected on Easter Day?

Will your answers be your truth, or the truth of those faithful who witnessed these things and has been believed by the faithful remnant of believers ever since?

Walk the Way of the Cross once more with the one who is the Way, the Truth and the Life.

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April 2022