

TRINITY NEWS

Easter IV The Sources of Hope in the Elusiveness of Truthfulness

We use words such as fairness, honesty, hope, love, faith and trust, integrity, decency, and many other words that lift up our spirits. We hope that they will not be torn to pieces when they float away from our mouths into the discourses of the world around us. We watch power figures in other lands strutting around in suits and uniforms, promising that they will annihilate their own people “for the good of the nation”. Under the outfits the barbarity of the past still finds its way to the surface, as it does with all us. We in the so-called civilized world have given them the weapons to kill more effectively and to make some of their old tribal atrocities look like child’s play. It is one of the great conundrums of our time and every time. That is, why human beings think that causing such violence and perpetuating cycles of hate has anything to do with being “truly human.” Nor is the instilling of cringing fear into the hearts and minds of people, especially of children, in any way related to soundness of mind or any hopes and dreams of a better world. These sickening scenarios are repeated in various places around the world all the time.

Today the model in the church is that of the good Shepherd. It has behind it the concept of the Shepherd of Israel. Christ describes himself as the Good Shepherd. He refused the title “good” on at least one occasion because it was used to set him up and manipulate him. He declared that God alone is “good” and he indicated that our use of it to describe ourselves has very little bearing on reality.

Goodness is related to equanimity, but any essential goodness can be marred by the pictures painted on our hearts by our disagreeable experiences of life. We cannot take them in so we bury them in a picture that covers the hurt in our heart that may never get healed. This is one of the fundamental causes of un-truthfulness about ourselves. Evading the truth distorts our inner peace, even if it convinces others. We damage ourselves in some sense so that we are unable to face the realities of our own life. It is far easier to deceive ourselves. Then, as the writer of I John says, we are deceiving ourselves and “the truth is not in us”. These pictures that conceal our real hurts can cause immense damage to our health and well-being. We are sometimes totally unaware of them. I think that this is the reason why Christ spent so much time probing away at people’s motivations and indeed his own. He never spared himself the truth about himself or other people. Fortunately he was easier on people

around him than he was on himself. The desperate cry at the cross from the lips of Christ was a cry from his heart about the cost of facing the truth. Yet in facing it, he unravelled the truth for all of us to say it and he gave us a model that we can never forget. He gave us the freedom to say, "My God, my God why have you forsaken me?" The raw honesty in that cry gives us hope! Christ was still crying out to **my** God. Such incredible trust!

The Jews want the world never to forget the Holocaust and they suffer sometimes from their own preoccupation with this enormous icon of suffering on their journey. This is made worse by those who in their madness claim that it never happened. It takes a lot of hatred to muster up the energy to say that one of the great heart wounds in history never really happened.

We Christians should always draw the attention of the world to the Cross as a demonstration of enormously costly truth. The Greeks loved abstract truths, but for me the greatest document in their language, the Greek New Testament, is about a very non-abstract series of truths culminating in a massive confrontation with the truth about ourselves and the truth about God at the Cross.

Being dishonest about ourselves is not only a betrayal of ourselves and others, but also of our relationship with God. It is also very bad for our health because at the bottom of our psyche there is a concealed crack in the formation of our thinking and in the emotional ties that are bound up with it. The mind and the senses boggle at this disconnection and send negative signals to all of the positive sensors of health and goodness in our body. We are just beginning to understand the depth of the damage this causes and its implications for soundness of body and mind.

The Shepherd goes to the Cross. The cosmic drama there is about truth enshrined in love, the only way to live truly from the depths of our being. The Shepherd came bearing love and he left Calvary with it intact and still available for all of us.

Bishop Arthur Jones

THIS WEEK:

Tuesday, May 1.

- Labor Day [*Holiday. OFFICE CLOSED*]
- Group Discussion @ the Tutton's (#3 Sta. Potenciana, Urdaneta Village)

Thursday, May 3.

- Midweek Eucharist, 10am, Chapel.



NEXT WEEK'S READINGS:

Acts 8:26-40; Psalm 66
1 John 3:18-24; John 14:15-21