



HOMILY by Father Robbie Low

1st Sunday of Lent Year A

I am the Way, the Truth and the Life

Readings: *Genesis 2:7-9 – 3:1-7, Ps 50, Romans 5: 12-19, Matthew 4: 1-11*

Read all about it:

RADICAL RABBI TRASHES TORAH

In a sensational development this afternoon the Galilee Goyboy, Jesus of Nazareth, poured scorn on the teaching and traditions of the Chosen People. In a deliberate set piece encounter, in front of hundreds of supporters and enquirers, He said, 'Hang all the Law and the Prophets!'

If we had our present press around in Jerusalem two thousand years ago that, I suspect, is what we would have got. It's a big story about a major public figure. It quotes Him correctly but not in context and utterly detaches the words from the meaning and intention of the speaker.

As we know, Jesus had just given an answer to the question, '*which is the greatest commandment?*' And He had replied: '*You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and all your mind and all your soul and all your strength. And the second commandment is like it. You shall love your neighbour as yourself. ON THESE TWO COMMANDMENTS HANG ALL THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS.*'

Different story altogether. In fact, in press terms, it is not a story at all. Priest affirms teaching of the Church is not a story.

The danger of the place we have got to in reporting is that, while a lie is very easy to spot, a half truth is much more difficult to expose and eradicate. There is nothing new in this. It is, for those of us familiar with Holy Scripture, one of the regular tactics of the old enemy. In today's Genesis account the tempter does not lie directly but he implies untruth and impugns the goodness of God by subtle implication.

'Did God really say.....you may not eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden?' Actually God did not say that but the Devil has sown a seed of doubt and untruth which will lead to disobedience and destruction. Not only, the Devil implies, is God being utterly unreasonable in His restrictions and repressive behaviour but He is not telling the truth. The enemy moves from half-truth to the lie direct. 'You will not die. In fact you will become equal to God.' God is defending not you but His own self-interest. How quickly and seamlessly dishonest reporting moves from half-truth to lie, from apparent open conversation to lobbying for evil.

We live in an age which now cheerfully describes itself as post-Christian, post-modern and now, inevitably, post-truth. Newspapers are less burdened by factual reporting than by the endless honking and hooting opinions of the overpaid lackeys of interest groups. The BBC, once the flagship of impartiality, now wallows in a culture of self-righteousness and 'self-evident truths' that alienate, exclude or ridicule those who do not share its world view. The internet and social media forums are a cesspit of distortion, bullying and abuse.

Recent democratic expressions, on both sides of the pond, have led to a ceaseless vilification of opponents and deliberate misattribution of motives.

As followers of Jesus and adherents to the Gold Standard of God, we have a peculiar duty to the Truth. We cannot and must not accept a post-truth society. That is demonic and will end in destruction. Nor can we allow the caricaturing of the Faith and the misrepresentation of God to go unchallenged in our daily discourse.

The representation, in the Garden of Eden, of God as a killjoy is constantly recycled in our own time, ironically, by the fashionable atheists. As followers of Christ we know God as not the Creator of Man but the One who loves us above all, wants the best for us and longs to winch us out of the misery of sin and death into the eternal joy of His Kingdom. He wants for us not the fruit of the knowledge of evil but that we come to the Tree of Life on Calvary and are healed and raised up by its fruit.

We live in a society which, for the most part, does not know Jesus. We are the only people now who know the story of salvation. If we do not tell it honestly and clearly, how will anyone have a chance to know Him and love Him?

If we leave the commentary to the post-truth media and the lobby groups who seek the death of the innocent and the corruption of Man, we should not be surprised if our churches are not full. The common man has heard the message of the tempter. God is a tyrant who doesn't want you to enjoy life. AND..... listen to the tripe talked at the crematorium.....you will not die.

We are the people who have to tell the truth. We are the people who have to live the truth. We are the people who have to daily witness to the love of God in Jesus and His desire for the salvation of all. The clue is in the Gospel. Each temptation and half-truth of the enemy, Jesus overturns by the Word of God.

We do not need to be clever. We just need to know Him and His Word.

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