

HOMILY – 5TH SUNDAY OF EASTER – 14 MAY 2017

John 14:1-12 – Farewell Discourse

Somebody said to me this week, it is much easier telling the truth because to be a good liar you have to have a very good memory. You will all know the phrase ‘Oh what a tangles web we weave if we seek only to deceive’.

In the Gospel today, Jesus tells us straight ‘Trust in God still and trust in me’. In other words, ‘I am not here to deceive you, I do not tell lies’. Look at the evidence I give you, if nothing else.

Today, we live in an increasingly distrustful society. The implication often is, no one can be trusted, so everyone is under suspicion. On my day off last week, I went to Galloway, stopped by the river Dee, near Castle Douglas, for a walk and there was a camera watching me as I parked the car!! In someone’s garden!! Suspicious minds, fear, insecurity, conflicting interests cloud our senses. In light of all of this, we must hold onto the ones we can trust, the person who will never let us down. The goal then for all of us, is the one communion with Jesus Christ. “I am the way” says Jesus. He became human precisely so that we might see the Father in Him. To follow his way, so challenging and even crazy for us, so that meditating on his actions, we would progress towards the truth. “Trust in God, trust in Me”.

For many of us, in the beginning, we may not understand him well, with time, we will discover the Lord and understand that His way is ours. Sometimes, it is only by passing through our own Calvary experience that we will achieve our own truth of Christ and arrive at life. Sometimes, we are determined to do our own thing, only have a token Catholic faith, we make mistakes, fall down then eventually come to our senses and plead with God to help us.

When I counsel/teach young couples for Marriage/Baptism/their child’s Sacraments, I really encourage them to have a living faith in Christ. To pray together, to sort out their problems through knowing and loving Christ Jesus. To recognize that if you consciously or unconsciously shut Jesus Christ out of your daily lives, they take on a much more perilous path. So, Jesus is the way, there is no other way. He is our vision of life. Sacraments without a living faith are waster on us.

As one old lovely Church of Scotland Minister said to me once, in Tranent, the main thing is to concentrate on the main thing and the main thing is Jesus Christ. I really believe that if Jesus Christ is at the centre of your life, you pray to him, love him and serve him, then you will not choose to beat your wife/husband, experiment with drugs, steal from your parents, violently assault your neighbor. It is all contradictory to faith.

In the second reading, Simon Peter, Apostle, a man who knows all too well what it is to have a moment of weakness, urges the early Christians to remember that, the Lord, Jesus, is the living stone, rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him. Think about it, God has been rejected by so many people, yet it does not prevent Him from seeking to love and forgive us, that hope remains there until the moment we die.

If you truly love Christ and you have done something really stupid/sinful, then the desire should be to bang on the doors of the Church, to seek repentance and absolution for our sins. It is a case of spoiling the relationship with the one who loves you. Surely the desire is to make it well again, to restore our lives in Christ.

Peter uses a beautiful metaphor for our identity with God, that the Church is made up of 'Living Stones', that together at Mass, we make a spiritual house. That we can, as people of the way, keep each other on the right track, to come back to Christ and be reconciled. To be co-builders of the Kingdom.

I pray that husbands do that for wives, that children do that for parents, that, as priests, we do that for you, but at times, it is you, the parishioners, who help the priest to remain faithful to Christ, to restore our priesthood.

The truth is, we all need Christ, we need each other, we need our Catholic faith and by faith, we turn the stumbling blocks of life into living stones of faith. It would be great if the stones of the wall separating the Palestinians and the Jews, was turned into a house of reconciliation.

God Bless you all

Amen