

HOMILY – TRANSFIGURATION OF THE LORD - 6 AUGUST 2017

“Telling the Truth”

Simon Peter – The ‘Apostle Witness’

St Peter knows that he will die soon, through martyrdom.....therefore it is important that he passes on the truth of Jesus before he goes. V12 – “That is why I will always go on recalling the same truths”.

St Peter is in a very privileged position of revelation. He knows, along with James and John, that Jesus was Transfigured on Mount Hurels and a voice made it clear, “This is my Son, the Beloved, He enjoys my favour, listen to Him”. Therefore, Peter knows from historical evidence, that Jesus is God. Not merely a preacher, healer and miracle worker, remarkable as these things are. He is also God – The Son of the Father. Just think about it for a moment. He was there at The Transfiguration, he was there at the Calming of the Storm. He was there, too, at the Raising of Lazarus, the Healing of Bartimeus, the Feeding of the Five Thousand, the anger in the temple, the entry into Jerusalem and so much more.

It was only in a moment of weakness, tempted by self-preservation, that he told a lie to prevent himself being arrested. It broke his heart afterwards, that he had betrayed Our Lord.

What about you and I, do we ever tell lies? Are we tempted by self-preservation to deny who we are? Or avoid getting into trouble? When we are children, we are often tempted to tell lies so that we don't get disciplined. But spiritual maturity encourages us to be honest and true. In a sense, that is what Confession is about. That for so long I have denied my sins and faults but now is the time to face them so that I can be given absolution, do my penance and move on. To be set free!!

Like the Prodigal Son, saying to the Father, I have sinned against Heaven and against you. I no longer deserve to be called your son. The short term pain of honesty of sins committed is rewarded by a new and enlightened beginning. Or, the woman at the well, ‘I have no husband’, Jesus in reply, ‘You have had five’.

Sadly, lying is endemic in our society today. In the Criminal Justice system, people lie to avoid fines or even imprisonment. Lies are told to incriminate innocent people or to find ways to justify the breakup of a marriage, they are at the root of infidelity, vengeance and pride. The whole culture of corruption, drug trafficking and terrorism is nurtured in a secrecy of lies.

The more someone lies, the more they see it as normal, even to the point where they don't know the truth from fiction. Don't encourage your child to lie!

To overcome our lies, we much have the courage to be honest with those who trust us and the victims of lies must also be ready when someone is truly sorry to have the mercy to forgive them.

It takes a long time or it can do, to rebuild trust but it can be done, if there is the will on both sides. See how merciful Jesus is to a liar. Just look at how Jesus forgives Peter for denying him three times.

The question being asked by Jesus to us, is the same as he asked to Simon Peter. Do you love me? Because if we love someone then the last thing we want is to lose their trust.

Because our society today is increasingly fearful of dishonesty and deception, therefore no one is trusted. The premise is, trust cannot be expected, it has to be proved by the passage of time.

Perhaps our mission, our Transfiguration, in the 21st Century as Catholics, as parents, as people in public office, as clergy, as politicians etc, is to prove that we can be trusted. Then our motives are truly Christ-centred and not self-centred. That Broxburn or Uphall or Winchburgh is an honest town.

Jesus, when he came down from the mountain top, entrusted Peter, James and John, with the Apostolic witness of the Transfiguration. That it would only be brought to light after he had risen from the dead. They would not understand this, until it truly happened. God never tells lies. All that Jesus prophesied has been fulfilled. This will continue and we must bear that in mind. Otherwise, if we fail to listen to his teaching, when it has been given to us, we cannot tell lies and say that we never heard it. God in Jesus has been given to us in our Catholic faith, it is our only hope and salvation.

And remember, God knows all about us, you can never deceive him, no matter what a good liar you think you are!! "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life".

God Bless