

Easter 6A

One of the Serbian generals, during his trial in the Haigh some years ago was accused of crimes against humanity during the Balkan war of the early nineties. But surprisingly, many of his fellow Serbs regarded him as a national hero.

So does the Truth vary depending on which side you're on? In public life politicians are often prone to put a spin on what they want their audience to hear if policy decisions are not going down very well with the public. Is that another way of disguising the truth?

In today's Gospel Jesus promised his followers the Spirit of Truth. Pope Benedict, God rest him, some years ago said that contemporary man is "wounded as a result of a crisis of Truth". Pilate's question to Jesus during his passion was: "truth, what is that"? That has become our question. In a certain sense the very search for objective truth has been abandoned, the late Pope emeritus said. Euthanasia is an example. Some people say it is an act of mercy. But we know that boundaries are crossed. Allowing a dying person to leave this world with dignity is one thing but having their lives ended prematurely when their death is not exactly imminent is quite another.

Jesus says: 'The Father will give you another Advocate, the Spirit of Truth whom the world can never receive'. These words seem to suggest that those who are guided by the Holy Spirit in their moral decisions may find themselves at variance with worldly minded people more swayed by the prevailing secular culture.

In our politically correct society, tolerance toward other religions is something we pride ourselves on. That's fine provided we don't see it as a renunciation of our own convictions. St Peter in the second reading says that "we must have our answers ready for people who question us about the truth of our faith"

The Holy Father has said that 'if we know the truth, must we hide it in the name of tolerance'. Part of this pseudo tolerance is that all religions are of equal value. According to some if I decide to change my religion it is not to be called 'conversion' because that would assign a higher status to the faith I am joining and so contradict the idea of equality. Equality, praiseworthy as it may be, is not an absolute value. A blanket imposition of equality across all of our society would result in a massive violation of justice and truth.

We can't play around with the truth. Some would go so far as to say that even mortal sin itself is relative depending on the situation. What is wrong for one person may not be for another. On these grounds, some even justify abortion and the truth 'goes out the window'. We cannot dress sin up to make it look like the right thing to do. But "in denouncing sin in no way must we 'write off' the sinner". That is gospel truth we must never ever forget.

Jesus says 'the truth will set you free'. As we approach Pentecost let us pray that the Holy Spirit may free our lives from falsehood and error and help us live out the truth in love.