

ST PIUS X WEEKLY REFLECTION

Truth

“Tell the truth and shame the devil” was an expression heard by most children of my generation (1950’s). We grew up recognising that truth was crucial to our faith and a civilised society.

I believe the full expression is “while you live, tell the truth and shame the Devil.” The preacher Hugh Latimer recorded this as a “common saying” 1555 in his “Twenty- Seven Sermons.” Shakespeare also used the expression in Henry IV Part 1, 1597.

Pontius Pilate asked Jesus the rhetorical question “What is Truth?” in response to Him saying “I have come into the world to testify to the truth.”

Truth has been a central concept in philosophy since ancient times. The ancient Greek philosophers sought to understand the nature of truth and its relationship to the world around them. Plato believed that truth was an objective reality that exists independently of our perceptions, while Aristotle claimed that truth could be discovered through empirical observation and reasoning. These early ideas still to influence philosophical thought today.

In Plato’s *Cratylus*, on the philosophy of language, Socrates says that *aletheia* (Greek, ‘truth’) is a compression of the phrase ‘a wandering that is divine.’ Since Plato, many thinkers have spoken of truth and God in the same breath, and truth has also been linked with concepts such as justice, power, and freedom. According to John the Apostle, Jesus said to the Jews: ‘And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.’

Following his defeat at the Battle of Actium in 31 BC, Mark Antony heard a rumour that Cleopatra had committed suicide and, in consequence, stabbed himself in the abdomen—only to discover that Cleopatra herself had been responsible for spreading the rumour. He later died in her arms. ‘Fake news’ is nothing new, but in our internet age it has spread like a disease.

John MacArthur wrote: (1) ask anyone today, “What is truth” and you’re to start an interesting conversation. The concept of truth has clearly fallen on hard times and the consequences of rejecting it are ravaging human society.”

The message from Bertrand Russell in the chapter “Truth and Falsehood” in his *Problems of Philosophy* (2) is that a belief is true when there is a corresponding fact and is false when there is no corresponding fact. The crucial word here is fact.

Saint Maximilian Kolbe is quoted as saying “No one in the world can change truth. What we can do and should do is to seek truth and to serve it when we have found it”.

Unfortunately, today people seek to establish different versions of the truth. Many people prefer their “own” truth. How these versions of the truth relate to fact is a disturbing question!

So, What is Truth?

Aaron Brake (Stand to reason - Clear Thinking Christianity) detailed the historical three dominant theories of truth put forth by philosophers: first is the pragmatic theory of truth – truth is what works; second is the coherence theory of truth – truth is logical consistency (coherence) among a set of beliefs an individual holds and third is the correspondence theory of truth – truth is when an idea, belief, or statement matches or corresponds with the way the world is in

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reality. He concludes that the correspondence view of truth is the only biblical and logically grounded view of the truth available and allowable. (3).

What does the Bible say?

The Old Testament refers to the Almighty as the "God of truth" (Deuteronomy 32:4; Psalm 31:5; Isaiah 65:16). When Jesus stated, "I am,,,,, the truth" (John 14:6), He was making a profound claim about His own deity. Praying to His heavenly Father on behalf of His disciples, He said "Sanctify them by Your truth" (John 17:17). Moreover, the word of God is eternal truth "which lives and abides forever (Peter 1:23).

Swearing on the Bible

In our jury system, every witness is asked to swear to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. They are asked to do so whilst holding a Bible or holy book (or affirmation) as evidence that they will in fact be truthful in any evidence they provide.

Today ,it is difficult to be sure that what we hear or what we read is in fact the truth. Writers have always had their own opinions but in the past they seem to have been more skilled in being objective in their writing about current events. Are we sure about the independence of broadcasters? When we hear or read about current events can we be sure that it is true? This is made significantly more difficult with A.I.

Pope Leo XIV said the principal threat facing both religion and science today is the denial of the existence of objective truth. He made this statement on 11May 2026 during an audience granted to members of the Vatican Observatory Foundation, which supports the work of the observatory located in Castel Gandolfo. "Today, however, science and religion face a different, and perhaps more insidious, threat: those who deny the very existence of objective truth," said the Pope. (4)

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1. The Truth War – John MacArthur
2. Bertrand Russell -Problems of Philosophy
3. Stands to Reason – Aaron Brake
4. First published by ACI Prensa, the Spanish language service Translated and adapted by EWTN News English. - Victoria Cardiel