

FAITH AND REASON

To Thine Own Self Be True: There is a ranch in Colorado at the base of a mountain. From the snowfields hundreds of feet above, two streams trickle down and divide. One stream grows until its waters are harnessed by engineers and used to irrigate 1000 ranches. The other stream runs into a valley, into a lake with no outlet, and becomes stagnant and poisonous. In this lake one can see the carcasses of animals that came to drink the polluted water. Some of them still stand upright in the miry bottom, their heads bent into the bitter lake. The first lake has an outlet, it spends itself and gives water to many homes. The other lake turns in upon itself and kills everything that touches it. The first lake gives and thereby becomes everything it was destined to be. The other lake has no outlet and thereby loses its life in stagnation.

And so it is with the members of the human family. Preoccupation with self is a cul-de-sac, a dead-end street. Preoccupation with self weighs heavily on the mind, on the will, the imagination, the emotions, the memory, and thereby effectively leading us where we should not go. Freedom of choice then becomes a mere shadow of its true self. Because we think as we live.

Thomas Becket was the closest friend and confidant of King Henry II Plantagenet, and loyal to the core. When the King appointed him Lord Chancellor of the Realm, Thomas Becket was shocked, even fearful. Nevertheless he rose to the occasion. When the Archbishop of Canterbury died, the King applied considerable pressure to have Thomas Becket - who was a Deacon - appointed Archbishop of Canterbury, Primate of all England. By so doing King Henry was determined to exert considerable control over the Church. Thomas pleaded with the King to reverse his decision.... the King refused. That decision King Henry would regret for the rest of his days.

Thomas Becket was always a troubled soul - there was always that something that he yearned for... "Where does Becket's honor lie"? "What if Becket should meet his honor face to face"? That is precisely what lay in the immediate future! The transition from playboy to Primate is enough to give the greatest dizzy spells. During this transition period Thomas went through a radical conversion. This placed him on a collision course with his closest friend, the King.

Archbishop Becket took a firm stand against the encroachment of the King on the rights of the Church - clearly stated in Magna Carta. On the evening of December 29, 1170 four Knights arrived at Canterbury Cathedral.

The Archbishop was at Vespers, assisted by a lay brother, who pleaded with him to leave at once. Archbishop Becket, from his days as Lord Chancellor, was well aware of the forces of evil that prevailed in the country. His response to the brother was "Open the doors, the door of God's house will be locked against no man". The four knights who had overheard the king in one of his drunken periods "Who will rid me of this Priest?" entered the Cathedral and murdered Archbishop Becket in the sanctuary.

The King did public penance The Tomb of the Martyr became what it is to this day, a place of pilgrimage for the world.

When people hear of such heroism it is usually of two minds about it. "More fool he" is frequently the reaction. Such a reaction belittles us. It is because people are doubtful about their own heroic qualities. It is because they are not certain whether or not they would have the courage to stand and speak if put to the test, that they take refuge in the cynical remark "more fool he".

Yet, even if we consider the person to be wrong and misguided, we admire such heroism. It presents us with a more exalted image of human nature: that there should be people who will stand in defense of a principle, even when they stand alone, and are at the mercy of their enemies, even when their aloneness and their helplessness makes them appear foolish. The stark fact of reality that is evident in all of this is, that silence has its limits. "Truth is not only violated by falsehood, it is equally outraged by silence" (Henri Frederick Amiel) **A meditation by Fr. William C. Mooney**

Peace and Truth: Peace convicts us if our lives, it brings us out of our own comfortable indifference into the struggle and pain. And it is only thus that true peace can come into being, in places of apparent peace beneath which lie hidden thoughts, emotions, and all kinds of conflict. Truth is worth pain and even conflict. It may not just accept a lie to have peace and quiet. For it is not the first duty of a Christian, to seek quiet, but rather it is that standing fast by what is noble and great, which is what Christ has given us and which can react as far as suffering, as far as a suffering end in martyrdom - and exactly in that way of peace. Jesus embodies the great and undiluted loving-kindness of God.

He comes to help us bear the load. He does not do this by simply taking away from us the pain of being human; that remains heavy enough. But we are no longer carrying it; he is carrying it with us. Jesus has nothing to do with the comfort and banality, yet we find on him that inner calm that comes from knowing that we are both supported by an ultimate kindness and ultimate security.

We see that the entire structure of the message of Jesus is full of tension, it is an enormous challenge. Its nature is such that it always has to do with the Cross. Anyone who is not ready to get burned, who is not at least willing for it to happen, will not come near. But we can always be sure that it is there that we shall meet true loving kindness, which helps us, which accepts us, and which does not merely mean well toward us, but which will in fact ensure that all things go well with us. **Pope Benedict XVI**

Living in Truth: The man who is too cultivated and socialized on top of a culture, which has already become false, is in need of another culture, a culture which is genuine. But" this can only start in the sincere and naked depths of his own personal self. Therefore, he must go back to contact himself. But this cultivated self, the culture he has received from without, and which is now decrepit and devoid of evidence, prevents him from doing this. So he has now no course other than to rise up against the culture, to shake himself free of it.... So that he may once more face the universe alive and in the flesh and return to living in truth..... **Jose Ortega Gasset**

All knowledge derives its dignity and nobility from the truth it expresses. Only in the unbiased pursuit of truth does any branch of knowledge preserve its integrity and freedom. "The truth will make you free" are words we enjoy validity; they are a source of light and strength for those who refuse to subordinate commitment to the truth to anything but the truth. Truth is the goal of the universe.
St Thomas Aquinas

A Thought For the Day

Sunday Redeemed man belongs at the center of the universe with Christ.
Monday Leave the past to God's mercy, the present to his love, the future to his providence.
Tuesday Next to Grace, time is the most precious gift of God. Yet how much of both is wasted.
Wednesday All things excellent are as difficult as they are rare.
Thursday He who is devout to the virgin Mother will never be lost.
Friday Holiness does not consist in being odd, but it does consist in being rare.
Saturday Virtue demands courage, constant effort and above all help from God.

The prayer of a young man before his ordination to the Priesthood: Let not his glory dim, O Lord, and this fervor fade; Always remember him, whom Thou has made thine own Anointed. Keep his heart, from all the dust of earth apart; and in Thy beaming comfort, ever be strength to his frailty.

Prayer for those who care for the sick: Merciful Lord, those who care for the sick who live with physical mental, emotional illness, in their patients, need your special care so as not to become emotionally involved with their patients. Give them your Spirit's gift of Wisdom that they do what duty requires of them, in a truly Christ like spirit. In the words of St Thomas Aquinas help them to do the truth in love, God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb...**Laurence Stern**

Defeating the hardness of hearts: Taking his cue from the reading from the Letter to the Hebrews (3:7-14), the Holy Father warned against slipping toward an "evil heart" and advised the faithful to seek "to grow" through God's Word and openness to the "action of the Holy Spirit". Citing the passage, "take care, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God", Pope Francis noted that this was a harsh thing to say to a Christian community. However, he added, we all run the risk of "slowly slipping toward an evil heart".

Three words, he observed, can help us to better comprehend the meaning behind the Letter: "hardness" of heart, "stubbornness" and "seduction", and thus understand if we are slipping toward an evil heart. "Jesus had found people who were closed to his message, everywhere" and he was "saddened by their hardness", by closed and hardened hearts. The Pope then explained that this hardness can enter our lives for many reasons ... for example, great suffering: "suffering hardens" the heart. He invited the faithful to ask themselves whether they have a hardened or closed heart and whether they are afraid to allow it to grow.

The second word is spiritual "stubbornness" which occurs when one is closed within one's own ideas and defends them. Those who are obstinate are "not open to the Holy Spirit: they are ideologues". And the question on which everyone should reflect is: "Do I have a stubborn heart?"

The third word is "seduction", our daily battle against the temptations of the devil. It is the evil heart that allows us to be seduced, leading to stubbornness and closure. The Holy Father concluded by suggesting that we "ask the Holy Spirit to enlighten us so as not to have an evil heart" ... **Pope Francis**

In His Will is Our Peace
Fr. William C. Mooney

Spiritual Direction and Confession
Email: Fr.WCmooney@gmail.com
Appointments: (904) 824-6625
Follow on Facebook: [Faith and Reason](#)
Instagram: [faith_and_reason](#)