

THE BACK OF THE BULLETIN

Consecrated in Truth

Can you remember a day when you first learned an important truth? Perhaps it was the day you won a scholarship, or learned you were ill, or decided to marry, or chose your career, or lost it, or learned something important about the world or about people, that would affect the course of your life for good or ill. Sometimes the truth *seeps* in, but sometimes it comes like an avalanche. Either way, we have to change when we learn it, and this can be done well or badly. I feel it's a lot to do with nimbleness and flexibility. Some truths we only "learn the hard way", with slow and painful struggle. It doesn't have to be like that.

The Truth Will Make You Free

We resist the truth because we feel it is going to bind us, restrict us, force us to change. But this is not giving truth its due honour. For anyone who believes in God, the truth is always alight with his glory. What we perceive as "bad news" is never finally bad, and contains within itself the promise of God's glory. Believing this takes a real act of faith on our part; and that lends the whole business of *learning and accepting the truth* huge value. What, after all, is the alternative? That we should take refuge in false things, false hopes, false joy? It sounds unlikely; but that's what we do when we resist the truth. I fear it happens in many lives, for much of the time.

Moments In The Mass

The penitential rite at the beginning of the Mass is a time for acknowledging the truth about ourselves very personally. Listening to the Word shines the light of God into our dark corners. Carrying our gifts to the altar is a moment of surrender, asking God to show us where our true gifts are. The Eucharistic Prayer reminds us of the sacrifice of Jesus, how he gave his body and blood so that we could receive the truth. The rite of peace and the breaking of the bread says that the redemption of the world comes through death and resurrection, and we meet what is eternally true about the breaking of daily bread. In our communion Christ gathers up the pieces of our broken world, and builds of them a new humanity, which opens its eyes wide to the Father of all. The Mass is the most honest of the deeds of earth, and we can only be part of it if we are willing to be consecrated in truth, with everything false cast out, excised, separated from us. Let us not wish our falsehoods to "die hard"; the sooner we can engage the real

world, our true life, the better. We have nothing to fear from truth.

Full Of Grace And Truth

There is a climate in the world that is finally getting cheesed off with falsehood. Our patience is running ragged with lying in public life, with the blandishments of the advertiser, the publicity man, the spin-doctor. We want to name and shame the defilers of our life, we want to know what we are being given to swallow, even in the supermarket trolley. There's merit in all of this; but of itself it isn't the loveliest of processes. There are so many campaigns where party strife disfigures, even distorts, the search for the truth, which should be formed by the power of love. When the Word becomes flesh, "we see his glory...full of grace and truth"; this *grace* is the Greek *charis*, which also gives us *charity*: it is the promised love of God, which upholds the whole of Creation. If we are in love with God, and consecrated to the hope he has held out to us in his Son, our obedience to this truth should be alight with this eternal love. I think that the determination to welcome the truth is the height of trust and love, the most perfectly graceful, generous and trustful mode we can live in. We can't live gracefully if we're just building up our stock of happiness, or pleasure, or fun: only if we're receiving life as a gift, and ready to cross eyes trustfully, truthfully, with the Giver of all true gifts.

Fr Philip