

*“For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth.*

*Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice.”*

As we hear the story of the betrayal, trial and death of Jesus we are again faced with an almost unbearable truth about the way we are capable of reacting to one who is innocent of any wrongdoing. Jesus has shown only love and compassion to those who have followed him and looked to him for healing and yet he is treated with injustice and brutality, ending in a criminal's execution.

In his encounter with Pilate Jesus speaks these words: “For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice.”

Jesus is the prisoner, the accused and the one who faces a possible sentence of death but somehow we sense that in another dimension it is Pilate who is on trial. In the way he responds to these words of truth he will bring his own judgment on himself.

We can say the same about the other characters in this narrative – that in their relationship with and reaction to the truth they bring about a judgment of themselves.

Judas turns against Jesus because the truth Jesus is speaking isn't the truth Judas wants to hear. In his anger he betrays Jesus.

Peter saw the truth about Jesus and declared him to be the Christ. He pledged his loyalty saying he would die rather than allow Jesus to be harmed. His loyalty and courage soon slip away from him and in his fear for himself he denies knowing Jesus.

Pilate seems to be seeking the truth about Jesus: who he is, what he's done and why his own people want to kill him. Pilate does try to act on what he believes the truth to be. But in the end, political expediency wins and Pilate gives Jesus over to be crucified.

So in the way Jesus is treated we see the way in which men and women can react to the voice of Truth when it challenges them and calls into question what they believe to be true.

In our world it's sometimes impossible to discern the truth of things we see and hear but it also seems to remain important to us to know what the truth is and who we can trust. If only we knew for sure that we were hearing the voice of truth we would listen to it and take notice of what it said.

Perhaps this Good Friday is a time to ask ourselves, and answer honestly, where we are in our relationship with Jesus who is “the way, and the truth, and the life”. We might imagine ourselves present throughout the events of the first Good Friday and be challenged by the way we are reacting.

We might sometimes, like Judas, be disillusioned and angry that the Truth asks us to forgive someone who has hurt us, or to let go of a grudge we’ve hugged to ourselves for years.

We might sometimes, like Peter, be excited and enthusiastic about our faith in Jesus until we realise that Truth asks us to bear ridicule, insults or even physical danger.

We might sometimes, like Pilate, genuinely want to know the Truth but back away when Truth asks for first place above everything else in our lives.

Whatever our relationship is with Jesus, the Truth, Good Friday tells us that he understands everything about our human, flawed lives and takes the initiative in seeking us out and revealing himself to us in ways we can trust.

That is why we shall come and kneel before him, adore, kiss his feet in showing to him our love for him, who died that we might live.

Amen