

5th Sunday of Easter – April 28/29, 2018

–Reflection

"Children, let us love not in word or speech but in deed and truth."

(The First Letter of St. John)

Truth. Almost from the first moments of Creation humans have had trouble with the truth. In the Garden of Eden, that idyllic place God made for His Adam and Eve to dwell in, the Serpent, the Prince of Lies wormed his way into their hearts and convinced them that God was lying to them so that they should disregard what the Creator had told them to do and not to do. The story tells us they bought the lie, ate the forbidden fruit, hid their shame and hid from God, and something in their souls broke and died.

In a fit of jealousy, Cain murdered his brother Abel and when God asks him where his brother is, Cain covers his crime with a lie, "How should I know, am I my brother's keeper?"

Jacob lies to his old blind father Isaac and pretends to be his older brother Esau so that he and not the elder might receive the father's blessing and the family inheritance.

David lies to his own loyal soldier Uriah to cover up the fact that he has slept with the man's wife and they have conceived a child, all while the soldier husband was away at the battlefield fighting for his king. The honest Uriah will not desert his post to come home and be with his

wife, so to hide his lie and his sin, David has the man killed on the front lines.

Herod the Great hears from the Wise Men of the birth of a new King of the Jews. He orders the seers to find the Child and then bring him word so that he too might go and worship. It is a lie. Herod only wants to eliminate any rivals to his throne and to kill the Child.

At the Last Supper, Jesus speaks of how His friends will desert Him. Peter protests and claims, "Even if the rest would desert you, I would never desert you. I would even die for you!" It is a lie, a lie that will be multiplied three times that very night!

At the end of the meal, Jesus tells them, "One of you will betray me." One by one, the disciples ask, "Is it I, Lord?" Finally, Judas who has already been well paid for his treachery, asks the same. It is a lie ... he has already betrayed His Good Master.

At His trial, the High Priests of Israel pay witnesses to testify falsely as to Jesus' claims so they might condemn Him. Lies, lies, and more lies!

Finally, even the hostile Roman governor can see through their trumped-up charges and when Jesus says that He came to testify to the truth, Pilate fairly spits with jaded cynicism, "What is truth?" ... finally, a word of honesty from the human race which seems to have lost any concept of the truth!!

I am most definitely ... and most sadly in this ... a card-carrying member of the human race. I have become too comfortable with lies: lies that protect me from blame; lies that get me out of hot water; lies that excuse me from responsibility; lies I tell myself that cover the true nature of what I do and justify as right; lies that make me look better;

and lies that make it seem that I know more than I do; lies that curry favor with those whose company I seek and whose respect I crave, lies that I hear but fail to expose and protest against as I become numb to their sheer number. I have even lied when I have confessed to what I have done to make it seem less serious, less blameworthy in the unseen eyes of the confessor behind the confessional screen.

Jesus, my Savior and Lord, tells me, "I Am the way and the truth and the life ... no one can come to the Father, except through Me."

What harm really are a coupla fibs ... a little stretching of the truth? What's so bad about a few little lies ... I mean, it's not like it's the end of the world!!

But now, it begins to dawn on me ... if Jesus is the TRUTH, and if Jesus is the WAY to God, the WAY to joy, the WAY to goodness, the WAY to eternal LIFE, then, when I lie, I am not in Jesus the TRUTH. And, if I'm not in Jesus, then I've fallen by the wayside, off the WAY. And, if I'm not on the WAY, then I'm lost. And if I'm lost, then I'm dead inside.

And, that ain't no lie!!

Come, let us set things right.

Speak truth. Live truth. Defend truth. Demand truth.

And, the truth will set you free!