

GRIST

Diocese of New Ulm Social Concerns Office October, 2008

VIII. Witness to the Truth

All sin is a form of lying...In everything you do, see God as your witness. *St. Augustine*

In our world it seems that as soon as a clear need appears, it is met falsely. It becomes a new occasion for exploitation. We know this to be true at all levels. To begin with trivial instances, we are not sold real apples or real ice cream, we are sold the idea of an apple, the memory of ice cream. Most people, for their fifteen cents, buy the idea of a newspaper. On other levels still, they hear the idea of music in elevators. In politics they are presented with ideas of honor, patriotism; in law, the shadows of justice. The media offer flimsy ideas of human attachment, the films produce spooks of passion and love. Then there are impresarios, performers, painters, and writers who offer in various packages the thinnest recollection, the phantom of art. The deepest of human needs are met by fraud, demagoguery, opportunism, and profiteering. The real thing will have to be preserved by tiny minorities. It is imperative that people should have something impractical, something gratuitous, something that does not defraud, exploit, or add more phantoms to a life already filled with phantoms, seductions, and cheats.

Saul Bellow

Some people achieve their greatest wickedness in silence. *Elias Canetti*

If a man smiles all the time, he's probably selling something that doesn't work.

George Carlin

In affairs of importance men show themselves at their best advantage; in small matters they are seen as they are...If one wishes to avoid being a charlatan, one must shun platforms, for if one sets foot on them, a charlatan one must be, otherwise the crowd will throw stones...One reason why organizations and assemblies never

manage to do anything sensible is that in a public debate the most telling thing that could be said for or against the matter or person in question can seldom be said aloud without considerable dangers or great awkwardness...

Three things annoy me both morally and physically, both figuratively and literally: noise, wind and smoke. *Chamfort*

The essential often appears at the end of a long conversation. The great truths are spoken on the doorstep. *E. M. Cioran*

All truth is a species of revelation. *Samuel Taylor Coleridge*

Character is how you behave when no one is looking. Character is how you behave in response to the company you keep, seen and unseen. *Robert Coles*

They who know the truth are not equal to those who love it, and they who love it are not equal to those who delight in it. *Confucius*

You can tell the ideals of a nation by its advertisements. *Norman Douglas*

Watch your own speech, and notice how it is guided by your less conscious purposes. *George Eliot*

Let nothing be done in your life, which will cause you fear if it becomes known to your neighbor. *Epicurus*

Seek, listen to, teach, love, abide by, and defend the truth unto death. *John Hus*

A great many people think they are thinking when they are rearranging their prejudices. *William James*

Language is the house of Being. In its home man dwells. *Martin Heidegger*

The eyes have one language everywhere.
George Herbert

In nothing do we lay ourselves so open
as in our manner of meeting and salutation.
Lavater

Try to get a living by the Truth – and go to the
Soup Societies. Heavens! Let any clergyman
try to preach the Truth from its very stronghold,
the pulpit, and they would ride him out of the
church on his own pulpit banister.
Herman Melville

If falsehood, like truth, had but one face, we
would be on more equal terms. For we would
consider the contrary of what the liar said to be
certain. But the opposite of truth has a hundred
thousand faces and an infinite field.
Montaigne

How good bad music and bad reasons sound
when we march against an enemy...Success has
always been a great liar. *Nietzsche*

Political language – and with variations this is
true of all political parties, from Conservatives
to Anarchists – is designed to make lies sound
truthful and murder respectable, and to give an
appearance of solidity to pure wind.
George Orwell

Silence is man's chief learning. *Palladas*

If all men knew what each said of the other,
there would not be four friends in the world.
Blaise Pascal

Forge thy tongue on the anvil of truth,
and what flies up, though it be but a spark,
shall have weight. *Pindar*

Character is simply habit long continued.
Plutarch

We would often be ashamed of our noblest
actions if all their motives were known...Our
enemies' opinion of us comes closer to the truth
than our own...Almost all our faults are more
pardonable than the methods we resort to hide
them...Perfect courage means doing

unwitnessed what we would be capable of with
the world looking on.
Francois de la Rochefoucauld

A lie may be told in silence, by equivocation,
by the accent on a syllable, by a glance of the
eye attaching a peculiar significance to a
sentence. *John Ruskin*

It is the nature of ambition to make men liars
and cheaters, to hide the truth in their breasts,
and show, like jugglers, another thing in their
mouths, to cut all friendships and enmities to the
measure of their own interest, and to make a
good countenance without the help of good will.
Sallust

But life is short and truth works far and lives
long: let us speak the truth.
Arthur Schopenhauer

Lord, save me from my tongue.
Sisoës (Desert Father)

Falsehood flies and the truth comes lingering
after; so that when men come to be undeceived it
is too late; the jest is over and the tale has had its
effect. *Jonathan Swift*

There is a demand today for men who can make
wrong appear right. *Terence*

Pilgrimage means that a man should control his
own tongue. *Tithoes (Desert Father)*

Everything you say tells me about yourself;
especially when you are speaking about
someone else...We get from Others almost all
that is essential, the bread we eat, even the
language we speak; not to mention the images of
ourselves we glean from the way they look at us,
their attitudes, remarks, and silences.
Paul Valery

Advertisers are the interpreters of our dreams.
Like the movies, they infect the routine futility
of our days with purposeful adventure. Their
weapons are our weaknesses: fear, ambition,
illness, pride, selfishness, desire, ignorance.
And these weapons must be kept bright as a
sword. *E. B. White*