

Homily for the Tenth Sunday of Ordinary Time - June 10, 2018

Well you just listened to fake news. You know politicians throw that term “fake news” around these days. You just heard an example of it in today’s “good news”.....which by the way is what the word gospel means.

Fake news is an attempt to discredit whatever truth the opposing political party says. Politicians do this all the time by placing an interpretation, a spin, on the subject under discussion.

So by those standards, the gospel scene just described, is “fake news”....it didn’t happenat least according to the interpretation of the Scribes and Pharisees. And they were there at the scene watching Jesus.

The Pharisees did not want to credit Jesus with miraculous power. So they gave alternative facts. Said Jesus was possessed.

Now the Pharisees would go on to spread misinformation about him. Eventually spread enough misinformation to divide the people against Jesus to get him crucified.

If misinformation can get God crucified, something similar can happen to a country like America. Certainly Russia believes that about us. All the evidence points to Russia trying to infiltrate out past presidential election.

How? By spreading false news and misinformation about political candidates.

And Like the Pharisees and Scribes in the gospel scene, we Americans are losing the capacity to recognize the truth. Consider what is happening in the media. Major news outlets, bloggers and political parties manipulate the truth.

For example watch your favorite evening news program where you have representatives from both political parties. They give their spin on the day’s events.

In fact they are often manipulating the truth. Trying to put each other down...sometimes screaming. It is great for television ratings. Yet it is becoming harder and harder to distinguish what is a fact and what is not.

The result is America has become a house divided against itself. And that is not just dangerous politically but also spiritually.

A professor of theology at Notre Dame tells of his son who no longer goes to church. He says his son and that generation believe that religion is only one opinion about reality.

The generation of his son says there is the opinion of the financial world of the bank and opinion of city hall and the university and political parties and..... that religion is just one more opinion among many opinions about life.

Why is all this important? In the bible the Prince of Darkness is called the Prince of lies. And Jesus makes it clear that among all sins, failure to acknowledge the truth is far and away the most dangerous.

This is why he comes out so strong against the Scribes and Pharisees. In fact he warns in today’s gospel that we can commit a sin that is unforgiveable.

What is this sin? Why is it unforgiveable? And what does it have to do with telling lies?

Look we make ourselves real in life by telling the truth. In lying we deny reality, separate ourselves from it. Then the habitual sin of lying does damage to our spirit. That is what happens in today's gospel text.

Jesus has just cast out a demon. Now part of the Jewish faith was that only someone who came from God had power to cast out a demon.

The scribes and Pharisees who just witnessed this casting out of the demon, looked on this to be an inconvenient truth. They denied Jesus goodness.

So in the face of this event they had to acknowledge something they did not want to....or they had to manipulate the truth to give it a different meaning. They chose the latter.

They knew better. They knew they were lying but the truth was too difficult to accept.

Jesus says be careful about what you are doing. You may come to believe your own lie.

And you will not be forgiven because you will see the truth as a lie, and a lie as the truth. The sin cannot be forgiven not because God does not want to forgive, but because we no longer want to be forgiven.

Truth is under attack today....almost everywhere. It is the ultimate moral danger.....isn't this why Jesus says by losing touch with the truth we lose touch with God.....and so commit the sin that can never be forgiven?