

Sermon by Bishop Anne Dyer

Tell all the truth but tell it slant

(Gospel: Luke 12:32-37)

We have just heard today's gospel read for us, and it prompts two questions:

Where is your treasure?

Where is your heart?

Jesus is saying that what is central to our lives shapes all else – all that we do and think. We have options, choices, as to what we treasure, and these will determine where our heart is to be found.

As followers of Jesus Christ we are called to live differently, to so incline our lives and hearts towards God that we are changed forever, and show forth God's love and glory, as revealed in Jesus Christ, to those among whom we live.

We are called to make truth known.

We live in times when the concept of truth has been debased and devalued. It is not just that truth is seen as contextual, that there are alternative truths – more than this, when live in a time when lies are called truth.

There are many that hear the lies and believe them – political lies, economic lies, but also lies that are personal.

Many hear lies that tell them they are not loveable or loved, that they are of no value to society, that they – and any contribution they might make – is not needed or wanted.

But Jesus came being and speaking the truth, and he said that the truth sets people free.

From Jesus Christ, and in relationship with him, people learn the truth about who they really are. We are learning this truth for ourselves, and it is setting us free. We learn the

truth by being loved by God, and responding with the love of our heart. Where our heart is, there is our treasure.

Today we remember Chiara Offreduccio of Assisi, known to the Church as St Clare. She lived in the 13th century, was a follower of St Francis, and founder of the Poor Clares – that second order of the Franciscans who live lives marked by material poverty and sustained prayer, in order to make the love of Christ known to the world.

St Clare wrote this:

We become what we love

and who we love shapes what we become.

If we love things, we become a thing.

If we love nothing, we become nothing.

**Imitation is not a literal mimicking of Christ,
rather it means becoming the image of the beloved,
an image disclosed through transformation.**

**This means we are to become vessels
of God's compassionate love for others.**

She continues...

Loving one another with the charity of Christ, let the love you have in your hearts be shown outwardly in your deeds, so that compelled by such an example, (all) may grow in the love of God and charity for one another.

Living out the truth is not easy, yet it is essential if all are to be free.

The poet Emily Dickinson wrote (in poem 1263)

Tell all of the truth but tell it slant

The poem speaks about truth coming from an unexpected direction, because it is found by a careful exploration of what is revealed by the light of God, which includes exploring things less often examined or explored.

Tell all of the truth but tell it slant

If ever there was a phrase to describe Lynsay's ministry, as I have experienced it, this is it.

She tells the truth of God but tells it slant.

Lynsay has the gift of telling God's story and our story from a different perspective. The place from which she speaks is shaped by her personal experience and her life of prayer. As your Rector she will help you to look at things in a different way, and see truth that has always been present, but that, maybe, you have not seen before.

Lynsay is a deeply inclusive person, with a particular heart for those whose lives and gifts do not take the usual form, for those who find the way we do traditional church difficult for some reason. She understands what it means to be a carer, and her attention is inclined towards those who would love to find more time for faith and shared Christian life, but find that circumstances of care responsibilities make involvement difficult.

If you have not done so already, when you get home google 'Astonishing Community', and visit the on-line resource that Lynsay provides which is a window to God through the lives of some of the most quirky and 'out-there' saints in the Christian tradition. Here you will find that those that are sometimes odd or difficult or challenging in some way, have great insights into the love of God.

This church of St Ternan enjoys creativity, and has a longing to be deeply connected to the community in which it is set. Over many years, through much faithful ministry, you have grown in your confidence in God and in each other, you have become used to ministering in teams, and relaxed in the variety of gifts you each bring.

When I was a child I had a kaleidoscope – you might have had one too. I loved holding it up to the light and seeing the pattern it made – beauty made by little shards of glass set between mirrors. If you turned the tube then these same shards would move and make a new pattern – as beautiful as the one before – but different.

As a church, now is the time to allow the Holy Spirit to turn you, to be ready to make your next pattern under Lynsay's leadership.

In prayer, she will lead you to the heart of God, that together you might see old things and new things afresh, and learn the truth that sets you free.

Lynsay will help you tell all the truth but tell it slant.

She will help you deepen the inclination of your hearts towards God, so that you become more aware of the wonderful treasure that is yours in Christ.

St Clare knew herself to be poor and humble, that all her strength and riches lay in Christ.

Lynsay is growing in this same understanding, she knows that to be a good Rector she needs both the help of God and of you.

Love her and treasure her. Support her and pray for her. Listen to her carefully, and she will listen to you carefully in return.

Then together you might discover more of the truth that sets us all free.