



Allocutio



Praesentata Curia

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In the recent American election and even now a major issue has been raising its head: what is the truth? Questions have been raised about what is the real truth? We hear talk of fake news, stories in the media and in social media that are just plain false. How can we be sure?

But even before this and right now there is a much subtler falsehood taking place in the media. For a long time now the media has been choosing what we hear and don't hear. Real events and facts are being repressed. On the other hand certain truths are being presented out of their full context. And often what we are presented with are select images: images of the young, the good looking, the suave sounding and what appears the voice of reason. But God help you if you are of good spirit and fundamentally sound but prone to awkward expression or poor looks.

So you get some ordinary plodder politician trying his or her best who has worked sincerely and at cost, now finds he is pillaried for one careless statement he made. Or the worst image they could find of a trade unionist is presented in the media. And we in the Church have been particularly damaged by this. Find the oddity of a priest, focus on the sins of a small minority and overlook the bigger good the Church at all its levels has been doing. And talk about women's rights to have an abortion but do not mention that there is a baby striving to live in her womb.

Who is behind this? Certain politicians. Maybe. Certain ideologies which want to control life with their limited views? Maybe. Modern liberal agendas? Maybe. A policy of keeping viewers so that business will advertise? That is part of it. But we must not forget too what Our Lord spoke of: *the father of lies*.



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So what Our Lord says is so important: You be the light of the world. You be that true light which carries truth and sincerity and is not governed by the forces of this world or the subtle ways of the media. The world more than ever needs authentic lights which are without any agendas.

I am the light of the world says Jesus. He is grounded in reality and does not flinch from it. His Gospel challenges us all to face the truth. God has made everyone. God loves everyone. Before we were born in our mother's womb he knew us. We all exist because of him. So we must see everyone as our brother and sister and not belong to a world of them and us, or enemies and allies. We must love one another as God has loved us. We must welcome everyone who arrives among us from the first moment of their conception, loving them, welcoming them, encouraging them on and being their friend right until they die and even after as we help them by our prayers. We are not the people who see faults and judge and condemn. No, like Frank Duff we are the people who despite the woundedness see the good and encourage it and ensure the potential for good reaches its fulfilment.

To follow Christ is to belong no more to a political persuasion or an ideology or some agenda. We are counter cultural, an alternative, in that people will scratch their heads since we cannot be pigeon-holed.

How can we do this? Get to know Christ first in his radicalness. Stop and listen to his values and be changed by them. Share him in love and gentleness out of a heartfelt conviction but never aggressively nor judgementally and always with respect and genuine friendship to the other person.

Who might be the other person? The light of Christ and his love is to be shared with all you come in contact with. Some of you are grandparents. What a privilege to share the values of Christ with grandchildren by your own love and values. Or with other family members or friends of neighbours.



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We need courage. Let us pray not to be afraid. Let's ask the Holy Spirit to help us be courageous. Let us ask him to help us share the truths of God with both courage and wisdom and love and out of concern for others and our world.

Donald Trump, whatever you think of him, took on the media, 90% of which is against him, and is still confronting it with courage and a hard neck. So how much more should we who carry the Gospel not challenge the world and confound it? We are different and it is time to make that clear. Christ's Gospel doesn't neatly fit into earthly categories. It is not of this world. But it is a jewel. Find it and you have found the pearl of great price. Share it with others and do not be afraid.

Can I just mention one other thing for us who belong to Mary? She didn't get up on a soap box. She simply did what the Lord asked her, to be Jesus' mother. But what a light she gives. She is not a glary light but a gentle solid light which works effectively. No wonder she drew the Spirit. Let us ask her that we may be true lights in our modern world of so much darkness.